

# EDIFICATION

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A MONTHLY  
MAGAZINE

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“Seek that ye may excel to the edifying  
of the Church.” (1 Cor. xiv. 12).

VOLUME VI.

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## EDITOR'S FOREWORD.

*"Then had the churches rest . . . . and were edified ; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied."* (Acts ix. 32).

**S**EASONS of great disquiet and unrest are not characterized by much advancement in the work of building up believers, though afterwards it may be discovered that the testings had helped to greatly consolidate the work already done. The persecution which arose after the death of Stephen mightily shook up the early churches, but it was when rest was once more granted to them, that both edification and multiplication took place.

Nor is it otherwise to-day. We are not undergoing persecution from the world without. The disquiet that so often afflicts us is almost entirely generated from within ; yet it is none the less potent in its effect. The whole atmosphere of our age is electrical with unrest ; and this is just as true in the church as in the world. The great adversary knows right well how effectively unrest arrests edification. Let us not be ignorant of his devices.

It is true, of course, that we cannot avoid conflict. The adversary gives us no option here, and it is not ours to avoid it by tamely surrendering everything. What we have to watch against is the spirit of disquiet pervading our hearts and so leading us to act as agitators of others. Truth is never served by the methods of the agitator, no matter how good may be the cause for which he agitates. To act thus is a great snare to many a zealous man, but it is not of God and is most disastrous in its effects.

We greatly desire—in our small way—to promote edification, as may be supposed by the title of our magazine. Yet we keenly realize that it is not enough to supply some reading matter of a edifying nature, in order that our objective may be attained. Unless our readers have hearts at leisure and free from agitating circumstances, they will not profit much in their reading.

All true edification leads to holy practice. “Edified and walking.” *Walking* signifies *activities*; and to have our activities in the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Ghost is a wonderful thing. The fear of the Lord restrains all evil. The comfort of the Holy Ghost promotes all good. Multiplication follows as a necessary consequence, just as disquiet promotes disintegration.

So let us “study to be quiet,” and thus be in a suitable condition to receive any word

of edification which may reach us. Depend upon it the more we go in for edification the more we shall avoid agitation and have the joy of seeing multiplication. Mere sensationalism may sometimes gather crowds of hearers or readers, but such multiplication does not endure. We desire something that lasts; and may God grant to writers and readers, and the editor also, such grace as may conduce to this end.

## THE SEALING OF THE SPIRIT.

Who gets it? When? And for how long?

*(From Notes of an Address on Matthew xxv. 1-13).*

**M**Y subject is the Spirit in connection with the believer, sealing him for glory. The Holy Ghost's name is not mentioned in the verses we have read, yet it sets before us in parabolic language the very truth I want to accentuate with God's help.

In this passage the Lord Jesus is depicting for us the condition of things that will be found on earth amongst those who profess His name when He returns. I tell you it is alarming, if there is anything in the numbers, and, mark you, they are not my figures, they are His own. There were ten virgins, and they all went out to meet the Bridegroom, and all expected to be *inside*, and when the crucial test came fifty

per cent of them were *outside*. That is a very serious consideration for Christendom. Out of the ten, five of them, who expected to be on the right side of the door, found themselves on the wrong side. Who were the people who were found inside? The people that were ready.

I don't suppose that you or I could have picked out the five foolish ones. They were all virgins alike, they all started out with one objective, they all carried lamps in their hands to show that they were going to meet the Bridegroom, they intended to be at his wedding, they all fell asleep, they all woke up, and they all began to trim their lamps, and it was then that they were found out. If you are a sham professor of Christianity you are going to be found out, and if you are not found out before, you will be found out then. May God help you to take your bearings in the light of His presence, and at once. It was those who had the oil in their vessels with their lamps that were ready. Are you ready? Have you got the oil in your vessel?

Oil is a figure that has been constantly used in the Old Testament. It was used for anointing Prophets, Priests and Kings. When Elijah had to appoint his successor Elisha he was to anoint him with oil. When Samuel was to appoint a successor to Saul he was to anoint David the King, and when

Aaron and his sons were set apart for the priest's office, they were anointed with oil. When I come to the New Testament I find the Lord Jesus using a parable that shows the vital necessity of being possessed of oil, for it is a figure of the Spirit of God. In the New Testament you find one Person who takes the place of the Prophet, Priest and King, and who is that? Christ. He is the great Antitype, and when He was here He was anointed. You remember how He stood up in Nazareth to read in the book of Isaiah, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor," and when He closed the book He said, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears." When He is anointed, He is anointed with the Antitype of the oil, the Holy Spirit of God. And again in Acts x. we read of Him being anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power. Clearly then the oil is a figure of the Holy Spirit of God.

Now we come back to Matthew xxv. prepared to understand its doctrine. Have you received the Holy Ghost? That is the question. The same question is raised if we turn to Romans viii. 9. "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His," or, "not of Him." In other words, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, He is not what the Scripture calls a Christian.

He is not in proper Christian condition, since the great distinguishing mark of a Christian is that he has received the Spirit of Christ. Now if I ask you that question, perhaps you would be still in the dark as to giving an intelligent answer.

Turn then to Acts xix. and you will find that is the very question the Apostle Paul asked certain men at Ephesus. Finding certain disciples He said unto them, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? It is a perfectly Scriptural question. If I put that to you, what would you say? Perhaps your mind immediately goes back to some point in your history when a certain remarkable experience came into your soul. You thought you had come in for "the second blessing" and said to yourself, "Yes, I think I have got the Spirit." But receiving the Spirit is not an experience, though the man that receives the Spirit gets an experience. Experiences change and fade, the Holy Ghost does not.

I do not ask if you have received a careful Christian training, or if you have broken bread, but have you received the Holy Ghost? You say, "I don't know." Then God help you to be sufficiently earnest not to rest until you do. Well, you say, "Then what does it mean? Who does receive the Holy Spirit?" If we are to get this settled we must find a Scripture which

tells us who receives the Holy Ghost. I will ask several questions, and also supply the answers. I am going to put the questions, because if I don't the devil will one day, and he will put you into a corner and won't show you the road out. If I happen to corner you by these questions, I will show you the road out, my dear friends.

Who does receive the Holy Ghost? Open your Bibles at John vii. 38, 39. "He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake He of the Spirit which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified." Then who does receive Him? According to John vii. it is *the believer* that receives Him. That makes me feel a little more comfortable, because I am a believer.

Well now I am going to ask another question, a very serious and important one, God help you to take it in. If it is *the believer* that receives the Holy Spirit, have *all* believers received the Holy Spirit? Oh, you say, surely, certainly. If it is the believer that receives the Spirit, surely every believer has received the Spirit. Well turn back again to Acts xix. Paul asked, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye have believed? and they said to him "We have not so much as heard whether the Holy

Ghost is come." They knew that there was such a Person existing, but they had not heard whether He had come. Consequently Paul asked, "Unto what then were ye baptized?" They said, "To John's baptism." Paul replied, "John verily baptised with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on Him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." When they heard this they were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus, and when Paul had laid his hands upon them the Holy Ghost came on them. Here are some believers that had *not* received the Holy Spirit, so the answer is, No.

Someone may say, "You are making me feel very bad now, because how am I to know whether I am a believer that has received the Holy Spirit." Now don't get building on any Christian profession you may have made all these years, go down to your foundations, have you received the Holy Ghost since you believed? Well then, What is a person to believe to get the Holy Spirit? Here are some who believed, and who did not get the Spirit. Then what did they believe? Ah that is the point, and I want you to take it in. In John vii. it did not merely say, "the Spirit which *they that believe* should receive," but, "they that believe ON HIM."

Now turn to Ephesians i. 13. Here

is a point of interest to you, this epistle is written to the very people he was talking to in Acts xix. In writing to them he turns their minds back to that very important juncture in their history. This is what he says, "In whom ye [Gentiles] also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, [or, on believing] ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." What did they believe? They believed the gospel of their salvation. Well, you say, don't all believers believe the gospel? No, that is the solemn thing.

Let me illustrate it. What is the gospel? Glad tidings, God's gospel concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Suppose I am preaching on this platform one Sunday night and I read you a few words in Hebrews ix. "It is appointed unto men once to die but after this the judgment," and all that night I am pressing upon my hearers these two solemn facts that are staring them in the face,—death, and after death judgment. There is a man goes out at the end of the meeting and for a month he is in distress, hardly eating or sleeping. Oh, he says, I am on my way to death and judgment. He has been wakened up to the fact that he is a poor sinner on his way to death and judgment. Is he a believer? Well I should think so. Do you think he would tremble, do you think he would lose his sleep and appetite if he had not believed

God's word. He was a profound believer in it. But had he believed the gospel? There is not a word of gospel in it. There was no glad tidings in telling a man he is on his way to death and judgment, though it was solemnly true. He comes back again at the end of the month, and I am preaching here again, and happen to read a few verses from Hebrews ix. I begin, "It is appointed unto men once to die." Oh, he says, he is at it again; will I never get away from this. "As it is appointed unto men once to die but after this the judgment, so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." And this time I begin to preach the death of Christ for sinners. I tell him of the precious blood that cleanses from all sin, and this time he drinks that in like a thirsty man, and he goes away rejoicing in the knowledge of the fact that though it was appointed for him once to die, Christ has been offered in his place. That man goes away believing the gospel, and at peace this time, and he has got the Spirit.

I remember years ago preaching in a little country town in Wiltshire. A woman came into my meeting rather late one week night. She sat on the back seat, and we were singing the last verse of one of Frances Ridley Havergal's hymns. All she heard were the words in the verse,

"Though thy sins are red like crimson,  
Deep in scarlet glow!"

God sent those two lines like an arrow into that woman's soul, and for a fortnight she was in dire distress. She could do nothing properly. One morning a friend saw her hanging her clothes out. Tears were flowing over her cheeks. "Oh" says her neighbour, "Mrs. — you are in trouble, what is the matter? Are you not well?" "No it isn't that." "Has the postman brought you bad news this morning?" "No" "Well what is the matter?" "Oh it is my sins, my sins are red like crimson." "Oh, that's what is the matter with you. Why don't you go down to the gospel tent yonder on the green; People are getting blessing there, perhaps you might get a little comfort." "Oh, that is where I was made miserable. I never used to get like this before I heard those words." What did she believe? That her sins were red like crimson. However, she was persuaded to go back at the end of a fortnight, and the first hymn that was given out was the same.

She said to me at the end of the meeting, "When I came down to that last verse,

'Though thy sins are red like crimson,  
Deep in scarlet glow!'

why, it was just like opening an old wound. But how I missed those two last lines I don't know.

'Jesus' precious blood *can* make them  
White as snow!'

She drank those two lines of gospel truth in, as the thirsty ground welcomes the rain. What then? Why, she was able to sing thus,

“Jesus’ precious blood *has* made them  
White as snow!”

She said, “I could sing in the gladness of my heart my thanksgiving for the precious blood that could cleanse me white as snow.” That woman went out of the tent that night a believer *in the gospel*. She received the gospel of her salvation that day; and what happened? She was sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise. The Spirit of God seals the person that trusts the gospel. The gospel speaks of a finished work, the atoning blood, a risen and glorified Saviour, and faith resting in Him and on His finished work and on the written Word of God, the blessing of the gospel is received. So you see there are two kinds of believers. There is the man who has believed the truth of God against himself and then there comes the man who has believed the truth of God about Christ. That is believing the gospel.

And listen, it does not depend upon the value you put on the precious blood; it depends on the value God puts upon it. It is what He sees in it. He says it is of such virtue that it cleanses from every sin, and God puts to my credit all the value

He sees in it, and the moment you trust Him you stand before God in all the value of that blood, and as such He seals you as His own.

Let me illustrate the point. An old lady had a son out in India, a soldier lad. He had been away for many months and the old lady was in very great straits, and one day a lady visitor called upon her, and finding her in very great poverty she said, "Doesn't your son ever send you anything?" "Never sent me a penny," she said. "Does he write to you at all?" "Oh yes, he writes regularly, but never sends me any money." "Would you mind letting me have a look at one of his letters?" The old lady went to a cupboard and brought out a handful of letters and handed one to this lady. She opened it and said, "What is this?" "I don't know what it is," said the old lady, "I think it is a sort of paper they use in India!" Do you know what it was? It was a post office order. "Have you got any more?" "Oh, yes, he always sends me a piece of paper like that," and she found out there was a post office order in all her letters. "Come along with me to the Post Office," and she explained the circumstances to the Postmaster, and the old lady came away with more money in her hand than she had ever had in her life. What had she got? Had she got *the value she put on the orders*? No, she would have got nothing. But what did she get?

*She got all the value the Postmaster put on the orders.*

It isn't the value you see in the precious blood. God will put to your account all the value He sees in it. And what does it do? It will make you Christ's. It is the blood that makes us His. Oh, you say, this is a new theory. No, it is as old as the hills and older than that hymn you sang when you were in the Sunday School,

“Jesus is our Shepherd,  
For the sheep He bled,  
Every lamb is sprinkled  
With the blood He shed.  
Then on each He setteth  
His own secret sign  
'They that have My Spirit,  
These,' saith He, 'are Mine.'”

If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ  
He is none of His. Have you got Him?

A person said to me one day, “Is this your pocket handkerchief?” “Well I need not look at it. If you look at one corner it has got my name on. If it has not got my name on it isn't mine.” “Oh, it has your name on it.” “Well it is mine.” Did writing my name on my handkerchief make it mine? Not at all. You go into a shop and see if writing your name on a handkerchief will make it your own! I think you will be pretty soon stopped. No it isn't marking the handkerchiefs that makes them mine. It is the money transaction that makes them mine. I make them my own at

a cost, and when I have made them mine I mark them mine. That is all. It is the blood that *makes* me His, and it is the Spirit that *marks* me His.

In the days of old the officers of the Roman army went through a captured city and when they saw anything, that they thought would be a source of pleasure or delight to the Emperor, they put the Emperor's seal upon it. Woe betide any man that touched anything with the Emperor's seal on it! That bit of furniture was destined for the palace.

The first work of the Spirit in us is to awaken a need, and the next work is to bring the gospel to us. When that gospel and that Saviour is trusted then what follows? After that, we were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. For how long? Until the day of redemption,—that is the redemption of our bodies when we shall be introduced into the palace of glory: that is, *for ever*.

Now have you received the blessing? You say, "I have believed the gospel but I have no peace." Well you haven't believed the gospel. There are two reasons why a person is not enjoying peace. One is they do not *know* the gospel and the other is they do not *believe* it. One or the other.

I will just give you a little illustration

as I close. I am owing a debt of say £50. It is a source of trouble to me and you know it. You go to my creditor and offer him that which gives him satisfaction. You settle the debt and get a receipt. Am I as satisfied as the creditor? No, I am not. How is that? Because you have done that on the quiet and I know nothing at all about it. I am in the dark. But suppose you write a letter to me and tell me all. What do you intend that letter to do? You intend that letter to put me at rest. I get the letter and you meet me a month later and find me looking as miserable as ever. You say, "What is the matter?" "That money I owe Mr. —." "Didn't you get a letter from me telling you that the whole thing had been settled and I had the receipt?" "Yes, I wish I could feel satisfied about it!" "Look here," he says, "you *didn't believe* what I wrote to you." And no argument I could use would persuade him that I did believe. Don't tell me you believe the gospel of peace if you have not got the peace the gospel brings. God intends the message of salvation to bring its own peace to your soul. God is satisfied with Jesus. Faith says I am satisfied too.

The work has been done, I know it has been done and I believe the gospel tidings of peace. Having believed, I am sealed with the Holy Spirit until the day of redemption at the coming of the Lord.

ART. CUTTING.

## “THAT I MAY KNOW HIM.”

**T**HERE was once a great actor, who was asked at a drawing room function if he would recite to the guests. He readily acquiesced and asked if there was anything special that his audience would like him to recite. After a moment's pause an old minister of God, who happened to be present, said, “Sir, could you recite to us the twenty-third Psalm?”

A strange look passed over the actor's face. He paused for a moment and then said, “I could, and will upon one condition, and that is, that after I have recited it you, my friend, will do the same.”

“I!” said the minister in surprise, “But I am not an elocutionist. However if you wish it I will do so.”

Impressively the great actor began the Psalm. His voice, his intonation were perfect. He held his audience spell-bound, and as he finished a great burst of applause broke from the guests.

Then as it died down the old minister rose and began the same Psalm. His voice was not remarkable, his intonation was not faultless. When he had finished no sound of applause broke the silence, but there was not a dry eye in the whole of that crowded drawing room, and many heads were bowed.

Then the actor rose to his feet again. His voice shook as he laid his hand upon the shoulder of the old minister and said,

"I reached your ears, my friends, but he reached your hearts. *The difference is just this, I know the Psalm, BUT HE KNOWS THE SHEPHERD!*"

(Selected.)

## OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

(Romans i. 1—ii. 16).

Owing to the length of this epistle we purpose (D.V.) making our remarks briefer and more condensed than usual. It will therefore be more than ever necessary to refer to the Scripture itself as you read this article.

**T**HE great theme of the Epistle to the Romans is the Gospel of God, as is indicated in its opening words. It seems to fall quite naturally into three main sections, as follows:—

1. The Gospel fully unfolded, and expounded in orderly fashion, for the instruction of believers. (Chaps. i.-viii.).

2. God's dealings with men, in sending forth the Gospel to Gentiles, reconciled with His previous dealings, which were exclusively with Israel. (ix.-xi.).

3. Instructions and exhortations as to the conduct that befits the Gospel on the part of those who have received it. (xii.-xvi.).

It is one thing to carry the Gospel as

a herald to sinful men, and quite another to set it forth in detail for the establishment of saints. The former is the work of the evangelist, the latter that of the teacher. If we wish to hear Paul preaching the Gospel, whether to Jews or to the heathen, we turn to the Acts. If we wish him to instruct us in its fulness and glorious power, we read the Epistle to the Romans.

It is very fitting therefore that the opening words of the epistle should give us a brief summary of the Gospel. Jesus the Christ, who is God's Son, and our Lord, is the great theme of it, and it particularly concerns Him as the One who is risen from the dead. He truly came here as a real Man, so that He was David's seed on that side; yet He was not merely that, for there was another side, not what He was "according to the flesh," but "according to the Spirit of holiness." He was the Son of God in power, and the resurrection of the dead declared it; whether it was His own resurrection, or His wielding the power of resurrection while still on earth.

From that same powerful Son of God Paul derived his apostleship and the grace to fulfil it, for he was set apart to herald forth the glad tidings. The scope of that message was not limited as the law had been. It was for all nations; and those who received the message, by obeying it, were revealed as the called ones of Jesus Christ. Such were the Romans to whom he wrote.

The Apostle evidently knew many of the saints living in Rome, who had doubtless migrated there from the lands further to the east, but as yet he had not personally visited the great metropolis; hence what he says in verses 8 to 15. They had a good report and Paul longed and prayed that he might see them, but had hitherto been hindered. His desire was their thorough establishment in the faith by his imparting to them things of a spiritual nature. He explains what he means in verse 12; the gifts were to be in the nature of mutual upbuilding in the faith, rather than the bestowing of great abilities, miraculous powers, and the like. It is better to be godly than gifted.

From verse 15 it would appear that not all the believers in Rome had as yet heard the Gospel unfolded in all its fulness, as Paul was commissioned to set it forth. Hence, since the Lord had specially committed the Gospel to him as regards the Gentiles, he felt he was in their debt. He was ready to discharge that obligation, and since he had been hindered as to bodily presence, he would do it by letter.

Now the Gospel was in reproach. It has always been so from the earliest days, yet the Apostle had not an atom of shame in regard to it because of its power. Only let a man believe it, no matter whether he be Jew or Gentile, and it proves itself to be God's mighty force or energy to his salva-

tion. It is exactly so to-day. Men may ridicule it in theory but only the wilfully blind can deny its power, which is most manifest when those who believe it have been living in the depths of degradation.

And observe, it is the power of God because there is revealed in it the righteousness of God. Here we are face to face with a truth of first-rate importance—*there is no salvation apart from righteousness*; nor would any right-minded person wish there to be.

But let us make sure that we catch the drift of verse 17. "Righteousness of God revealed" is in contrast with the law, the leading feature of which was righteousness *from man required*. The Gospel's righteousness is "from faith." The preposition, *from* is a little unfortunatè. It is rather *by*. The righteousness which the law demanded from men was to be by (or, on the principle of) works. The righteousness of God which the Gospel reveals is to be reached by faith. Then again the Gospel reveals God's righteousness *to* faith whereas all that the law brought it revealed to sight. The first occurrence of the word, faith, stands in contrast to *works*, the second to *sight*. In the book of Habakkuk there is a prophecy which is fulfilled in the Gospel, "The just shall live by faith." The preposition here translated "by" is just the one translated "from" immediately before. Not by works but by faith.

The Gospel, then, reveals *the righteousness of God*, and proves itself to be *the power of God* unto salvation, but it has behind it as a dark background, *the wrath of God*, of which verse 18 speaks. Righteousness and power unite to-day for the salvation of the believer. In the coming day they will unite in adding terror to His wrath. The wrath is not yet executed, but it is revealed as coming from heaven without distinction upon all man's evil, whether it be open evil or the more subtle evil of "holding the truth in unrighteousness," as was done, for instance, by the Jew.

From this point the Apostle proceeds to show that all men are hopelessly lost and subject to the judgment and wrath of God. First of all—verse 19 to the end of chapter i.—he deals with the Barbarians, of whom he had spoken in verse 14. They at least had the witness of creation, which testified to the eternal power and Godhead of the Creator and makes them to be without excuse.

Here we have the passage that deals with the vexed question of the responsibility of the heathen. What about the heathen?—how often is that question asked! Certain facts stand out very distinctly.

1. Those peoples that are now heathen *once knew God*. Man's course has not been from polytheism to monotheism, as some dreamers

would have us imagine, but the other way round. They have sunk out of light into the darkness. Once "they knew God," (v. 21) but the fact is, "they did not like to retain God in their knowledge." (v. 28).

2. The root cause of their fall was that they did not wish to yield to God the glory that was his due, for they wished to pose as wise themselves—as we see in verses 21 and 22. In short, *pride* was the root and God has allowed them to make fools of themselves.

3. Their descent has been *gradual*. First vain thinkings: then, darkened understandings, gross idolatry, to be followed by outrageous sins in which they fell below the level of the beasts. Each generation went beyond the follies of their predecessors, thus ratifying for themselves the previous departure.

4. Their plight has been reached under *the government of God*. Three times over do we get the phrase (with slight variations) "God gave them up to . . ." If men object to thinking of God and give Him up, they have no ground of complaint when He gives them up. And if they give up God, and consequently good, they naturally find themselves given up to everything that is evil and degrading. There is an ironic justice about God's government.

5. The final item in this dreadful tragedy is that they know their practices are wrong and worthy of death, and yet they not only go on with them but are utterly fascinated by them. *They delight in them* to such an extent that they find pleasure in others sinning even as they do themselves.

If we really allow this fearful picture of human depravity to imprint itself on our minds we shall have no difficulty in acquiescing in the Divine verdict that all such are "*without excuse.*" (v. 20).

The heathen world of nineteen centuries ago had however in its midst a number of peoples who were highly civilized. The apostle Paul knew that he was as regards the Gospel as much a debtor to the Greek who was wise, as to the Barbarian who was unwise. As we open chapter ii., we find him turning from the one to the other. His style becomes very graphic. It is almost as if at this point he saw a highly refined and polished Greek standing by, and quite approving of his denunciation of the enormities of the poor Barbarians. So he wheeled round and boldly charged him with doing in a refined way the very same things as in their grosser forms he condemned in the Barbarian. Thereby he too stands before God without excuse, for in judging others he condemned himself.

Under the term, Greek, the Apostle included all those peoples who at that time

had been educated and refined under the influence of Grecian culture. The Roman himself would come under the term. They were fine fellows externally, brainy, intelligent and fond of reasoning. In the first eleven verses of this chapter Paul reasons with them as to righteousness and judgment to come, and where can you match these verses for pungency and brevity and power.

The Greeks had a certain code of outward morality. They loved beauty and strength and cultivated their bodies to these ends. This alone preserved them from the deadly excesses of the barbarians. Yet they knew how to indulge themselves discreetly, how to sin scientifically. The same feature marks our age. A present day slogan in the world might be, "Don't sin coarsely and clumsily, sin scientifically." Under such circumstances it is very easy for men to deceive themselves; very easy to imagine that, if only one approves good things in theory, and avoids the grosser manifestations of evil, one is secure oneself from the judgment of God.

Take note of three steps in Paul's argument:—

1. "The judgment of God is *according to truth.*" (v. 2). Truth means reality. No unreality will stand in the presence of God, but everything be manifested as it is. A poor prospect for the Greek, whose virtues were only skin deep.

2. There is to the "revelation of the *righteous* judgment of God." (v. 5). A wretched criminal may have the truth of his crime dragged into the light, yet if the presiding judge be incompetent or unrighteous he may escape. The Divine judgments are righteous as well as according to truth.

3. "There is *no respect of persons* with God." (v. 11). In some countries to-day respect of persons provides the undoubted criminal with an avenue of escape. Favouritism does its work, or other influences behind the scenes, or even bribery is set in motion, and the offender escapes the penalty he deserves. It will never be thus with God.

There is, then, no avenue of escape for the refined sinner or mere moralist. Indeed, it would appear that he will come in for severer condemnation. His very knowledge heightens his guilt, for repentance is the goal to which the goodness of God would lead him, but he despises God's goodness in the hardness of his heart and so treasures up wrath to himself.

The statements of verses 6 to 11 present a difficulty to some minds inasmuch as in them no mention is made of faith in Christ. Some read verse 7, for instance, and say, "There! So after all you have only got to keep on doing good and seeking good, and eternal life will be yours at the end."

We have only to read on a little further however, and we discover that no one does good or seeks good, except he believes in Christ.

The ground of judgment before God is *our works*. If anyone does truly believe in the Saviour he experiences salvation, and hence has power to do what is good and to continue in it. Moreover the whole object of his life is changed, and he begins to seek glory and honour and that state of incorruptibility which is to be ours at the coming of the Lord. On the other hand there are all too many who, instead of obeying the truth by believing the Gospel, remain slaves of sin. The works of these will receive well-merited condemnation in the day of judgment.

At this point in the argument someone might wish to say, "Well, but all these people had never had the advantage of knowing God's holy law, as the Jew had. Is it right to condemn them like this?" Paul felt this, and so added verses 12 to 16. He stated that those who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law in the day when God judges by Jesus Christ. Whereas those who have sinned without having the light of the law will not be held responsible for that light:—nevertheless they will *perish*. Verses 13 to 15 are a parenthesis, you notice. To get the sense you read on from verse 12 to verse 16.

The parenthesis shows us that many things which the law demanded were of such a nature that men knew they were wrong in their hearts without any law being given. And further men had the warning voice of conscience as to these things even when they had no knowledge of the law of Moses. Go where you will you find that men, even the most degraded, have a certain amount of natural light or instinct as to things that are right or wrong. Also they have conscience, and thoughts which either accuse or excuse. Hence there is a ground of judgment against them apart from the law.

When God judges men by Jesus Christ there will be a third ground of judgment. Not only *natural conscience*, and *the law*, but also "according to *my Gospel*." Judgment will not be set until the fulness of gospel testimony has gone forth. Those who are judged and condemned as having been in the light of the Gospel will fare far worse than those condemned as in the light of the law or of conscience. And in that day the *secrets* of men are to be judged, though their condemnation will be on the ground of works.

Oh, what a day will the day of judgment be! May we have a deep sense of its impending terrors. May we earnestly labour to save at least some from ever having to face it.

## THE FRUITS OF CONVERSION.

“**B**Y their fruits ye shall know them” (Matt. vii. 20), is a test so obvious that it needs no proving. If a young man or woman professes to be converted, it will certainly be evidenced by a change of life. It is true that salvation is by grace alone, through faith, “not of works, lest any man should boast.” (Eph. ii. 9). It is equally true that believers “are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” (Eph. ii. 10). These works do not procure salvation in the smallest degree, but are the evidence that we are saved. They are the product, not of the old nature, not of the flesh, but of the new nature, the new man “created in Christ Jesus.” The very grace of God that has brought us salvation teaches us “that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.” (Titus ii. 12).

It is clear then that if we are really converted to God, there will be a change of life; and if there is not, we may well ask, if we are not deceiving ourselves by a false profession. How does the changed life manifest itself?

*There will be a love for the Scriptures.* The Book that brings us good news and salvation must indeed be dear to every young Christian. It is the book that God puts into our hands, inspired by Him, "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim. iii. 16). It is the only source of light and teaching, outside the Book of Creation, that anyone has. Creation will overwhelm us with its august testimony to its Creator's eternal power and Godhead. The heavens are the work of God's fingers. But whilst God's fingers are seen in Creation, His heart is manifested in redemption, and *spiritual* light and blessing must come to us alone through the Scriptures. Our knowledge of God, of Christ; of redemption; of the believer's blessings in the gospel; of new creation; of the church, the body of Christ; of the assembly; of our relation to this world; of the Lord's coming; of our eternal future—all comes to us through the Scriptures. No real Christian, but has a love for the Scriptures.

The Scriptures known and practised make strong Christians. "I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the Word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one." (1 John ii. 14). Just as a young man is the emblem of maturity and strength, so Christians, who have grown to maturity in the Christian life, are here addressed. And what was the

secret of their strength, and their ability to overcome the wicked one? Surely, the Word of God. For this two things were necessary, (1) knowledge of the Scriptures, and (2) putting its teaching into practice. It does not say that the Word of God abode in their memories, it abode in them, that is, its power was felt in their lives.

Now it is plain that we cannot have the practice of the Bible without its knowledge. So we press on the young converts, study the Word of God from Genesis to Revelation. Study it diligently, seek grace to practice its precepts. Do not study it as mere literature,—it is the most wonderful book in the world from that standpoint—but feed upon it, assimilate it into your very spiritual being.

*There will be love for prayer.* This is the way of approach to God's presence in connection with our needs; needs as to our spiritual well-being, needs as to service for the Lord, needs as to temporal matters as well as spiritual. All God's eminent servants have been men of prayer. Our blessed Exemplar, the Lord Jesus Christ, spent whole nights in prayer. One instance will suffice: "And it came to pass in those days, that He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God." (Luke vi. 12). "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. v. 17), is the injunction

of Scripture. It is good to pass through all the hours of the day in a spirit of prayer. Our verse does not mean that we must pray all day and night long. That were an impossibility. But it means we have to pray and go on praying. It has not to be by fits and starts.

We are to pray "for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty" (1 Tim. ii. 1, 2). The Apostle Paul writes, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints" (Eph. vi. 18). The young Christian, who prays, is one that is sure to be blessed and be a blessing. What scope there is for prayer!

*There will be love for your fellow-Christians.* We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren" (1 John iii. 14). As unconverted we disliked Christian people. But when the new nature began to operate, it showed itself in love arising in our hearts, and going out to the Lord's people just because they are His. If we are warm towards the Lord, we shall be warm to His people; if we are cold towards the Lord, we shall be cold towards His people. There is nothing cliquish or clannish or partial in this love. It is the one happy thing in this cold world.

*There will be love for the meetings.* "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another, and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." (Heb. x. 25). "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." (Acts ii. 42). Scriptures such as these are clear and explicit.

The importance of the Lord's people getting to the meetings cannot be over-rated. God in His wisdom has put His people into assemblies. All true believers on the face of the earth constitute the assembly, the one body of Christ. But, separated by distance, they perforce gather together locally and form assemblies.

May we press upon young Christians the importance of the meetings for their own sakes, for their own welfare, as well as for the help of the meetings.

Young Christians are apt to leave the prayer meetings and Bible readings to the older Christians and to consider that it does not matter much if they are present or not. It matters a great deal, and we urge all young Christians to get into the habit of attending all the assembly meetings they possibly can. Forsake the meetings, and backsliding is sure to follow.

Much more could be said on these lines. We have simply indicated four ways in which the new life will manifest itself. May God add His blessing, and give enlargement of heart to every young convert.

A. J. POLLOCK.

## WORLDLINESS IN DRESS.

**E**VERYTHING about the Christian should be in keeping with the profession that he makes. Even the deportment and manner of dress are mentioned in 1 Timothy ii. 9. Christian women in their adorning are to be marked by modesty and discretion, and not by the meretricious ornaments of gold, or pearls, or costly clothing. This is to be much remembered.

A hundred years ago, when the light of the Heavenly Calling, and of the Lord's coming for His people, broke in upon the slumbering saints, it aroused true, warm-hearted affection for Christ, such as had not been witnessed for many a day. Great spiritual energy was shown in going forth to meet the Bridegroom, and all that was felt to be unsuited to Him was given up. The fact that they were strangers and pilgrims took a real hold upon those who were thus awakened. The cost was not calculated. Prudence calculates, but true devotedness never. "The zeal of Thine house hath eaten me up" is its language.

A proof of the power these heavenly realities exercised over the minds and hearts of God's people was soon seen. There was an auction at Plymouth, lasting for three days, of jewellery, plate, and other things deemed unnecessary for those who belonged to heaven, and the money obtained from the sale was devoted to the work of the Lord. It was a little sample of Pentecostal grace, power, and joy, and of the Spirit's work in awakening believers, leading them to gird up their loins, and to have their lights burning, and the lamp of testimony bright and clear, ready for the coming of the Lord.

The remembrance of Israel's devotedness when they shook off the shackles of Egypt was delightful to His heart. "I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after Me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown. Israel was holiness unto the Lord" (Jer. ii. 2, 3).

If the coming out from Egypt and entering the wilderness to be with God and to be His peculiar treasure was sweet to the memory of Jehovah, can we believe that the Pentecostal devotedness, and that which was akin to it a century ago, was not delightful to Him? He loves what is the fruit of the Spirit in the saints—true devotedness to Himself. And *devotedness* only considers what is suited to the One that is its object.

It has been well said of those who were so affected at that time, that they had closed the front door on the world. We shall leave it to each one to say whether in these later days the back door has not been opened to let it in again.

It cannot be denied that whatever is worn for mere display is for the exaltation of self, and not of Christ. It is the evidence of spiritual decline. Even worldlings can perceive the inconsistency of ornamentation and display by those who profess to be no longer of the world.

The saying is a true one that "every trace of Egypt is a reproach to the Christian." It is a reminder of his bitter bondage. The goodly Babylonish garment and the wedge of gold brought disaster on the warriors of Israel when fighting in the promised land. Similar things have had similar effects on those who are professedly God's warriors today. In contrast; one of the greatest of them said, "Silver and gold have I none," and another described himself as "Poor, yet making many rich."

Why does the Holy Spirit forbid the wearing of gold, pearls, and costly array? Let us open our Bibles, and with our eye upon the words in the Epistle to Timothy, ask God, whose words they are, why He placed them there, and whether He meant them to be obeyed or not.

Let us be honest, and abandon the feeble talk about legality, too often used as an excuse for worldliness. Remember that it is the Word of God we are looking at, and that we cannot slight it, or turn aside its keen edge except to our own spiritual hurt and God's dishonour.

Why have the most spiritual leaders ever known in the Church always discarded such things? Why did they give up all that would have given them a standing in the sight of their fellows? Why have they been so highly commended for their simplicity, even by those who were not moving with them in the truth of the Heavenly Calling? Is it not that they thus put into practice the truth they professed?

One great danger of the wearing of gold, pearls, and costly array, is that people are thereby given an undue place, even in the assembly, as James in his practical epistle affirms. (James ii. 2).

James must have been grieved to see it, or he would not have written about it. In the assembly no one should receive respect for anything save devotedness to Christ and true spirituality. Nothing of man should be recognized in that sphere where Christ is Head.

One has said that it is no excuse for worldliness to say, "Oh! I can afford it." There is no self-denial there. Self-denial in

daily practice is the denying of what exalts self. If that be wanting, a badge of true discipleship is lacking. Said the One who had not where to lay His head, "If any man will come after Me, let him *deny himself*, and take up his cross and follow Me."

Our bodies are the Lord's. They are the dwelling-place of the Holy Spirit, and are for the display of Christ. We are exhorted to present them to God a living sacrifice, and not to be conformed to the world, but be transformed by the renewing of our minds (Rom. xii. 2). A complete change is to be seen outwardly as the result of the new mind which rules the body. The old mind made it the slave of sin and folly, the new makes it serviceable for the good pleasure of God.

We ought to seek to please God rather than the world of which we no longer form a part. We ought not to bring what is worldly into the assembly where God dwells, nor to deck the dwelling-place of the Holy Spirit with what the Spirit Himself condemns. If we do, it is in disregard of His Holy Presence in us, and of the Word of God.

In the coming age, all that is worldly in appearance will be swept away from the children of Zion (Isa. iii. 16-24). If we seek to live in the power of the kingdom, out of which shall be cleared all things that tend to obscure the coming age, when the glory of Christ shall be universal, how differently shall we conduct ourselves!

Whatever exalts us in the world hides Christ, a thing which no one devoted to Him would allow. *Love to Him* will lead us into the obscure path that He so joyfully accepted, doing the Father's will. "The world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not." Oh, that whole-heartedness to Him were rekindled afresh in our hearts! Oh, that the one absorbing thought of our minds may be to give Him pleasure! The devotedness of each with respect to dress and outward appearance, helps others by the influence it sheds abroad for good. Every bit of worldliness in dress affects for evil those who are inclined that way. We either encourage people by our influence and example, or we do them harm.

Alas, the tide of worldliness has broken in upon the Church of God; its marks are visible to all. Many mourn over it in secret, though they may not have the courage to lift their voices in public against it.

Special conferences may be held for prayers and humiliation, and abject confession of worldliness made, but is it put away? We too rarely hear of jewels, gold chains, and other articles of personal adornment, being sold for the Lord's work. We still retain the marks of the world, and in measure it may be said of us, "This people draweth nigh to Me with their mouth, but their heart is far from Me."

Let each judge himself, or herself, by the unerring standard of Holy Scripture. What it forbids to be worn on our persons let us lay aside. This is not legality, but the service of love, and the truest liberty.

P.W.

## THE WILDERNESS JOURNEY.

**T**HE journey of the children of Israel through the wilderness is full of instruction to the Christian, whose journey is likened to that of a pilgrim. A wilderness is not a place we should choose to live in, as it does not suit us naturally nor minister to the needs of our physical nature. It therefore aptly sets forth certain lessons for us.

It was a desert that stretched from the land of Egypt, a type of the world, to the land of Caanan, a type of the heavenly position which God desires His people to enjoy now in Christ. During their sojourn in it God taught His people how He was able to take care of them under all conditions and circumstances, as He promised Moses; bringing them out of their bondage and taking them to a land flowing with milk and honey.

In the Red Sea we see the power of God put forth to deliver His people by the judgment of death on the enemy; and in the death of Christ we see the victory He has

wrought by going into death, annulling the enemy and atoning for our sin. When Moses brought out the Israelites from under the hand of Pharaoh, and through the Red Sea, the people were so relieved and glad that they sang praises to God, and danced for joy. But there is another lesson we have to learn, and that is how God can keep from the *power* of indwelling sin, so that sin shall not have dominion over us.

If we summarize what those forty years brought out on the part of the people, it was unbelief, complaints, murmuring and stubbornness, or in other words, the works of the flesh. That is what we are. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," and it is incorrigible.

The testing which wilderness circumstances brought to Israel could only be met by faith, so that those forty years of experiences showed that without faith we cannot enter into God's blessings. This point is taken up in Hebrews, showing that evil generation fell because of *unbelief*.

In the wilderness they found no water. There was nothing to appeal to them naturally, and so the Christian finds as he sets forth on the pathway of faith. We cannot find from this world anything to satisfy our new nature, and when they reached Marah they found disappointment, as we all do in this world. The tree which God showed

Moses changed the condition of the waters altogether. It was a picture of Christ crucified; He was the living tree cut down, as the Word says, "His life was taken from the earth." If we are willing to take His path because we love Him, then in taking up the cross we find the sweetness of His company and are overcomers by faith.

The Apostle Paul in Galatians tells us "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other." (v. 17.) It often takes us forty years to learn the secret of deliverance, but faith triumphs over difficulties because it looks at God.

It is interesting to see that at the start of their wilderness journey Amalek (a type of "the flesh") was the great hindrance to progress. (See Exod. xvii). What is said about him is that he slew the hindermost; this is often the case in our path of faith. We lag behind because we are not anxious to get on and we are overcome by the temptations of the flesh. He fought against Israel, but what enabled them to prevail was the intercession of Moses. Our safeguard against the weakness of the flesh is the power of Christ's intercession on high. Moses went into the mountain, uplifted his hands and Israel prevailed.

Then the children of Israel had God's provision in the manna. The manna was the first thing given for their food and

speaks of the heavenly Christ come down to be our food. The tree was Christ crucified. The manna is His humble pathway of faith. Surely this food would keep our hearts from resting in the wilderness, but it is written of Israel, "they loathed the manna and despised the pleasant land." Alas! how often this is the case with us. We fail to appreciate Christ in His humble pathway, and if we do not feed on Him, we shall not live by Him for it says, "He that eateth me, even he shall live by me." (John vi. 57). This is why so many of us Christians fail in our testimony for God; we fail to feed on Christ, and thus appropriate His grace.

He who was the living bread that came down from heaven manifested forth the glory of God, and in appreciating Christ and living for His pleasure, we also glorify God. God's object in saving us is not only to take us to glory, but that we may be a peculiar people, zealous of good works in this world. As Christ has been cast out, we are to manifest Him in character and ways. This we can only do by faith and so we have to learn the wilderness lessons of the folly of unbelief, and the corruption of the flesh. This prepares us to accept death with Christ—typified by the passage of the Jordan into the land that flowed with milk and honey. Our death with Christ here means life with Him there. Then we enjoy the portion and liberty which grace has put us into in Him.

Beside the manna two further beautiful things were given so that God's people might be able to meet the difficulties of wilderness life and be overcomers.

First there was the water from the rock, and that rock was Christ. The Lord Jesus told the woman of Samaria that "the water which I will give shall be in you a well of water springing up unto eternal life", so that we find all our thirst satisfied in a living Christ once smitten of God and afflicted, but raised again for our justification.

Then, when the guilt of Israel rose to its height in rebellion, so that the plague began, and but for Moses' intercession, the people would have been destroyed as one man, a new thing is introduced. We read in Numbers xvii. how twelve rods were introduced, one for each tribe, and laid up before the Lord. In the morning the one which was Aaron's had budded, blossomed, brought forth almonds, and then the Spirit of God tells us, "thou shalt quite take away their murmurings from Me." This rod was typical of a risen Christ as High Priest for His people. This is the power to carry His people through. The twelve rods were in a place of death, being severed from their root; but the rod that budded spoke of that Blessed One who cannot be holden of death, but was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father.

How beautiful it is to see that in spite of our stubbornness and sin God goes on with us. God kept His word; He ever will, and if we have the faith of Caleb, we shall like him think of God's delight in us, whom He has redeemed. Then we shall be overcomers and enjoy, as Caleb did all those forty years, the anticipation of our Heavenly Caanan.

A. E. WALKER.

## OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

(*Romans ii. 17—iii. 31*).

Owing to the length of this epistle we have made our remarks briefer and more condensed than usual. It will therefore be more than ever necessary to refer to the Scripture itself as you read this article.

**H**AVING dealt with the Barbarian and the Greek, proving that both alike are without excuse and subject to the judgment of God, the Apostle turns to consider the case of the Jew. The graphic style with which he started chapter ii. continues to the end of the chapter. He seems to see a Jew standing by as well as a Greek, and in verse 17 he turns from the one to address the other.

The Jew not only possessed the witness of creation, and of natural conscience, but also of the law. The law brought him a knowledge of God and of His will, which placed him far above all others in religious matters. He made, however, one great mistake. He treated the law as something in

which he could boast, and therefore it ministered to his pride. Says the Apostle, "thou . . . retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God." He did not realize that the law was not given to him as something in which to *rest*, but as something to act as a *test*.

The test is applied to him from verse 21 to the end of the chapter. He comes out of it with his reputation utterly shattered. True he had the form of knowledge and truth in the law, but it all acted as a two-edged sword. He had been so busy turning its keen edge against other people that he entirely overlooked its application to himself. He viewed it for others as a standard—as a plumb-line or spirit level—but for himself he thought it a personal adornment, a feather to be stuck in his cap.

Do not let us be at all surprised at his doing this, for it is just what we all do naturally. We pride ourselves upon our privileges and forget their corresponding responsibilities.

Each question in verses 21, 22 and 23 is like a sword-thrust. To each implied accusation the Jew had to plead guilty. He had the law truly, but by breaking it he dishonoured God, whose law it was. Indeed, their guilt was so flagrant that the Gentiles looked at the Jews and blasphemed God, whose representatives they were.

This being the state of affairs it was useless their falling back upon the fact that they were God's circumcised people. The argument of verses 25 to 29 is very important. It is not official position, which is an outward thing, that counts before God and puts right what is wrong. It is the inward thing that God values. God would have respect to the one who obeys, even were he an uncircumcised Gentile. He would reject the disobedient, even were he the circumcised Jew.

Paul knew well that all this would be very objectionable in Jewish ears, and that they would indignantly charge him with belittling and setting aside all that God had done in calling Israel out of Egypt to be His people. Hence the questions that he raises in the first verse of chapter iii. His answer is that it was indeed profitable to be a Jew, and chiefly in this, that he had the Word of God.

Let us at this point make a present day application. The position of privilege held in the former day by the Jew is now held by Christendom. There is an undoubted advantage in being born and bred in a "Christian" land, yet at the same time tremendous responsibilities. Also, it is sadly true that the awful sins of Christendom only provoke the heathen to blaspheme. The unconverted professor of the Christian religion will be judged according to the high

standard he has professed, and hence merit severer judgment.

The oracles of God to-day cover not only the Old but also the New Testament—not only the word of His law but also the word of His grace. But let us specially underline that word, *committed*. Of old the oracles of God were committed to the Jews; to-day they are to the Church. That is the true position. The Church is not the *producer* of the oracles, nor is she, as so many falsely assert, the only authorized *teacher* of them; she is simply the *custodian* of them. They are committed to her that by them the Spirit may be her Teacher.

In the beginning of our third chapter only the Jew and the law are in question. The Apostle knew well the quibbles raised by Jewish minds. He was aware too of slanderous reports that they circulated as concerning his teaching. Hence what he says in verses 3 to 8. He makes it perfectly plain that no amount of human unbelief can nullify or alter what God has said. "The faith of God" is, of course, all that which God has revealed, in order that men may receive it in faith.

Again, God is so supremely above man's evil and unbelief that He knows how to turn it ultimately into a kind of dark background whereon to display the brightness of His righteousness and truth. Does this in any way compromise Him, or make it

wrong for Him to judge the sinner? It does not: nor does it furnish any kind of excuse for those who would like to seize upon it as a reason for further wrong-doing, saying, "If my evil can thus be made to serve God's glory, I will proceed to accomplish more evil." The judgment of such will be certain and just.

What then is the position? Let us be sure that we understand it. Verse 9 raises this question. The position is, that though the Jew had certain great *advantages* as compared with the Gentile, he was no *better* than the Gentile. The Apostle had proved this before, especially in chapter ii. Both Jew and Gentile are "under sin." He was not however, in the case of the Jew, going to rest content with proving it by reasoning. He proceeds to quote directly against him his own Scriptures.

Verse 10 begins, "As it is written." And there follows down to the end of verse 18 a series of quotations from the Psalms and one from Isaiah, six in all. They describe in full the real state into which mankind is sunk.

The first quotation (vv. 10-12) is a passage found twice in the Psalms (xiv. and liii). Its repetition would seem to indicate that its statements are most important and on no account to be missed by us; though they are of such a nature that we should be very glad to miss them, if we had our

way. This quotation contains six statements of a general and comprehensive and sweeping nature. Four are negative statements and two positive. Four times we find "none," and twice "all," though the second time it is implied and not expressed. Let us face the sweeping indictment.

The first count is this: *None righteous*—not even one. This embraces us all. The statement is like a net, so capacious that it takes all in, so sound that not the smallest fish can find a rent that permits it to escape. Not one of us is right in our relations with God.

Someone who is contentious might reply, "That seems exaggerated. But even if true, man is an intelligent creature. He only has to be told, for him to put things right." But the second count is to the effect that *nobody does understand* their state of unrighteousness. They are incapable of fathoming their plight, or even a fraction of it. This considerably aggravates the position.

"Oh, well," says the contentious one, "if man's understanding is astray, there are his instincts and feelings. These are all right, and if followed will surely lead him after God." But count No. 3 confronts us—*there is no one who seeks after God*. Is that really so? It is indeed. Then what does man seek after? We all know, do we not? He seeks after self-pleasing, self-

advancement, self-glory. Consequently he seeks money, pleasure, sin. What he seeks when the power of God has touched his heart is another matter. The point here is what he seeks according to his fallen nature, and apart from the grace of God.

Man's *state* is wrong. His *mind* is wrong. His *heart* is wrong. This third count clinches the matter and seals his condemnation. It shows there is no point of recovery *in himself*.

Out of this flow the three counts of verse 12. All are astray. All, even if massed together, are unprofitable; just as you may add noughts to noughts in massed thousands, and it all amounts to nothing. And lastly, all man's works, as well as his ways are wrong. He may do a thousand things which upon the surface look very fair. Yet are they all wrong because done from a totally wrong motive. No work is right but that which springs from the seeking of God and his interests. And that is precisely what man never seeks, but rather his own interests, as we have just seen.

It is very striking how the words, "No, not one," occur at the end of the first and last of the counts. They have been translated, "Not even one . . . not so much as one," which is perhaps even more striking. Well then, may they strike home to all our hearts. We are not going to suppose that the Christian reader wishes to quarrel

with the indictment—we should at once doubt his Christianity if he did—but we are sure that many of us have accepted and read these words without at all fully realizing the state of the ruin, irremediable apart from the grace of God, which they reveal. It is most important that we should realize it, for except we correctly diagnose the disease we shall never properly appreciate the remedy.

The objector however may still have something to say. He may complain that all these six statements are of a general nature, and he may remind us that when lawyers have a weak case they indulge in much talk of a general sort so as to avoid being compelled to descend to particulars. If he speaks thus, he is immediately confronted by verses 13 to 18, in which particulars are given. These particulars relate to six members of man's body: his throat, tongue, lips, mouth, feet and eyes. It is in the body that man sins, and deeds done in the body are to be judged in the day that is before us all. Notice that of the members mentioned no less than four have to do with what we *say*. One refers to what we *do*, and one to what we *think*; for the eye is the window of the mind.

What an awful story it is! And what language! Take time that it may soak in. An "open sepulchre" for instance! How terribly expressive! Is man's throat like

the entrance to a cave filled with dead men's bones and all uncleanness and stench? It is. And not only is there uncleanness and stench but deceit and poison, cursing and bitterness. His ways are violence, destruction, misery. No peace is there, whilst God and His fear have no place in his mind.

Now all this was specially and pointedly said to the Jew. Paul reminds them of this in verse 19. They were the people under the law to whom the law primarily addressed itself. They might wish to brush it all aside, and make believe that it only applied to the Gentile. This was inadmissible. The laws of England address themselves to the English; the laws of China to the Chinese; the law of Moses to the Jew. Their own Scriptures condemn them, shutting their mouths and bringing in against them the sentence—Guilty before God.

This completes the story. Barbarian and Greek had before been proved guilty and without excuse. *All the world* is guilty before God. Moreover there is nothing in the law to extricate us from our guilt and judgment. Its part the rather is to bring home to us the knowledge of our sin. It has done this most effectually in the verses we have just considered.

Where then is hope to be found? Only in the Gospel. The unfolding of the Gospel starts with verse 21, the opening words of which are, "But now . . ." In contrast

with this story of unrelieved darkness there has now come to light another story. Blessed be God, ten thousand times ten thousand, that there is another story to tell. And here we have it told in an order that is divine, and in words that are divinely chosen. That word NOW is emphatic. We shall meet with it again several times in reference to various details of the Gospel message. Anticipate what is to come to the extent of reading the following verses, and observing its use:—v. 9; v. 11 (marginal reading); vi. 22; vii. 6; viii. 1.

The first word in connection with the Gospel is, "the righteousness of God," and not as we might have expected, the love of God. The fact is that man's sin is a direct challenge to God's righteousness, and hence that righteousness must in the first place be established. The whole Gospel scheme is founded in divine righteousness. What news can be better than that? It guarantees the stability and endurance of all that follows.

The Gospel then is, in the first place, the manifestation of the righteousness of God, altogether apart from the law, though both law and prophets had borne witness to it. That righteousness has been manifested, not in rightful legislation, nor in the execution of perfectly just retribution upon the transgressors, but in Christ and in the redemption that is in Him. In the death of

Christ there was a complete and final settlement, upon a righteous basis, of every question which man's sin had raised. This is stated in verse 25. Propitiation has been made. That is, full satisfaction has been rendered to the righteousness of God; and that not only in regard to the sins of those who are believers in this Gospel age, but also in regard to those of all previous ages. The "sins that are past," are the sins of those who lived before Christ came—past, that is, from the standpoint of the cross of Christ, and not from the standpoint of your conversion, or my conversion, or anybody's conversion.

That righteousness of God, which has been manifested and established in the death of Christ, is "*unto* all," but is only "*upon* all them that believe." Its bearing is unto or towards everybody. As far as God's intention in it is concerned, it is for all. On the other hand only those who actually believe receive the benefit. Then the righteousness of God is upon them in its realized effect, and they stand right with God. God Himself is the Justifier of the one who believes in Jesus, however great his guilt has been, and He is just in justifying him. This is stated in verse 26.

This glorious justification, this complete clearance, is the portion of all who believe in Jesus, whether Jew or Gentile. All have sinned, so that there is no difference as to

guilt. In the same way there is no difference in the way of justification. Faith in Christ, and that alone, puts a man right with God. This is stated in verse 30.

This way of blessing, as is evident, shuts out all boasting on the part of men. It is wholly excluded. Here is the reason why proud men hate the idea of the grace of God. We are justified freely by His grace. Grace gave Jesus to die. Grace is the way of God's acting in justification, and faith is the response upon our part. We are justified by faith apart from the works of the law. This is the conclusion to which we are led by the truth we have been considering.

The last verse of our chapter meets the objection, which might be raised by a zealous Jew, that this Gospel message cannot be true because it falsifies the law, indubitably given of God at an earlier time. "No," says Paul, "far from making the law null and void, we establish it by putting it in the place God always intended it to occupy."

Never was the law so honoured and established as in the death of Christ. The Gospel honours it by allowing it to do its proper work of bringing in the knowledge of sin. Then the Gospel steps in and does what the law was never intended to do. It brings complete justification to the believer in Jesus.

F. B. HOLE.

## “CHRIST THE GREAT REALITY.”

“For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.”

PHILIPPIANS III. 20.

“For our commonwealth has its existence in the heavens, from which also we await the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour.”

PHILIPPIANS III. 20. New Trans. of J.N.D.

**H**OW necessary it is that we should remember those words. How needful that we should remind one another—earnestly, lovingly, and often—that our commonwealth is in the heavens. Its seat is there. There, too, is our home, and that is the dear country to which we belong. So many things tend to make us forget it—the spirit of the age—the speed with which everything is going—the unrest that marks the day in which we live—the struggles of life—the eagerness to get on in the world—its pleasures—the questions of the hour—its changing politics—the shaking of institutions once thought to be as firm as the everlasting hills—these and kindred matters will take possession of our mind if the avenue is left unguarded, and becloud the fact that we are but strangers here and that heaven is our home.

And if we lose sight of it, if it fades from our memory, what a loss it is! A very precious element is gone from our Christian life, its heavenly colour and tone are gone, and we are in danger of becoming mere minders of earthly things. Should the Lord have entrusted us with any ministry of the Word, our service may indeed go on, and much that is blessed and helpful continue to mark it. But it will have one great defect, it will fail to attach the heart to Christ in glory. And this is an unspeakable loss.

Let us read down the chapter afresh and mark how the living Christ in heaven was the Object on which Paul's heart was set. For Him, for the excellency of the knowledge of Him, he had counted, and still did count, all things but dung and dross. The manner of his conversion, long years ago, may have given his life this blessed bent from the very start. He was not converted, as many of us were, by being shown his ruined state as a sinner before God, and that a full answer to his every need was to be found in Christ crucified and risen. In his outward life he was a blameless man. And he enjoyed many advantages in which he naturally placed some trust. But when, on his memorable journey to Damascus, his intolerant heart bent on stamping out the ever-growing "heresy" of Jesus of Nazareth, the Lord of Glory appeared unto him, the whole current of his life was changed. Lessons he learnt, no doubt, during those

three days and nights in which, deprived of sight, he neither ate nor drank. But he had seen a light above the brightness of the sun, and ever afterwards man's garish day, for him, was only darkness and night. Christ was his Saviour—had saved him. Much more. He was his Lord, the One for whom he would now live, the One who had won his heart and given him perfect rest. From that day his ship set sail on another sea. Henceforth the world was crucified to him and he unto the world.

“I have heard the voice of Jesus,  
Tell me not of aught beside ;  
I have seen the face of Jesus,  
All my soul is satisfied.”

And ought it not to be so with ourselves? Even though our conversion was not of the Pauline type, yet the same blessed One who revealed Himself to him has made Himself known to us. It is no other Saviour whose love we know and whom we have learned to love. All that Paul's heart found in Him is there for us to find. All of Christ is ours. There are no limitations, save in our capacity to receive. Observe, I am not now speaking of Christ in all His sufficiency to meet our need as pilgrims in the wilderness ; I speak of Him as an Object to engage the heart, to detach it from all earthly things and to fill it with joy unspeakable.

Does this strike any reader as being vague and visionary? It is not so. The things

which are unseen are eternal. It is the visible that perishes and passes away. Christ is THE great Reality. And as we love and prize Him so shall we surely find that the Holy Spirit will fill the widening vision of our soul with His beauty and glory. But not apart from the Holy Scriptures, for it is in those fair fields that all His glories shine.

It is a matter of common knowledge that where a man's treasure is, there will his heart be also. Our Lord Himself has said so. Look at Daniel in Babylon. He had risen to a position of eminence in the land of his captivity. Honour, wealth, and the monarch's favour, all these were his and all combined to induce him to find his home there. But thrice every day, with his window open towards Jerusalem, he poured out his soul in prayer to the God of his fathers. The home of his affections was not amid the pleasures of the Babylonish court. Jerusalem, though in ruins and in the hands of the stranger, was the place where his heart really lived. His treasure was there. "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning" (Ps. cxxxvii.). And so it is with the miner, labouring in the dark mine. He does not live and make his home in the bowels of the earth. His home is above, in the light of the blue sky, in the cottage where his wife and children are. Oh, what a blessed thing when Christ in glory becomes our chief treasure! We then live

in our spiritual affections, where He is, and Heaven becomes our present home in a very real sense.

Nor is that all. Our commonwealth has its existence in the heavens. But there is more. We also look for the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour. We look for Him to come from thence to complete the salvation with which our souls have been already blessed. For this mortal body of ours, this body of humiliation, shall be conformed to His body of glory. We *look* for the Saviour. Here we may well inquire whether we are indeed *looking* for Him. Looking seems to imply something more than a belief that He will one day come again. We are sure that He will come. Long have we been convinced of that. It is an article of our faith that no one shall shake. Yes, Christ is coming again. But are we waiting for Him? Is it a matter of earnest yet patient hope? We fear not in all cases. Are we not conscious—some of us—that this “blessed hope” has waned? Once it burned brightly in our souls, and the thought of our Lord’s possible return thrilled us with joy. Like the ten virgins of Matthew xxv., we went forth to meet the Bridegroom. Is it still so? Each must answer for himself. And some of us can remember how in bygone days it held a foremost place in the ministry of the Word. It was more frequently spoken about then than now, and it was the subject of many a happy and joyous song. Let us

pray that the hope of our Lord's return may be brightened where it has become dim.

"Oh, kindle within us a holy desire,  
Like that which was found in Thy people of old,  
Who tasted Thy love, and whose hearts were on fire,  
While they waited in patience, Thy face to behold."

It cannot but be revived if Christ in glory gains and holds the heart, if we walk with Him, live to Him, and if we let it be plainly seen that we are but "strangers and pilgrims" here.

And in writing of these things the Apostle spoke of some whose manner of life cost him bitter tears. "Many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ." Such were his words. And if any ask, Of whom did he say this? Of open and flagrant opposers of the gospel? On the contrary, they stood in the Christian ranks and were enrolled among the professed disciples of the Lord. But their life was a shameless denial of the truths that cluster around the Cross. For that Cross may be viewed in many lights. It is the emphatic expression of the world's judgment of Christ. Instead of acknowledging His claims they rejected them and crowned Him in great derision with a bramble crown and sent Him to the gallows. What link, then, could there be between loyal-hearted followers of Christ and the world that poured upon Him their scorn, hatred, and contempt? For Paul

there was none. He could exercise towards them the ministry of reconciliation with which he had been entrusted; he could beseech men to be reconciled to God; but for the world, that had crucified the Lord of Glory, and himself there was no common standing-ground. The world was crucified unto him, and he unto the world (Gal. vi. 14).

And there, too, in that Cross, “our old man” has been crucified with Christ. It has been branded with the stigma of the Cross. No longer is “our old man” to be ministered to and recognized as having any status at all. To forget this, to deny it in practical everyday life is to be an enemy of the Cross of Christ—not of the atoning aspect of it, not as a means of pardon and safety, but as that which severs every link with the world and carries out the sentence of death upon “the flesh,” whether religious or corrupt (see Phil. iii. 3-6 and Gal. v. 16, 24). Yes, the ones over whom Paul wept were Christians in name; but they were living to themselves, and glorifying in that which, had they known it, was only to their shame. They were minding earthly things. It is in contrast to all this that the Apostle says, “*Our* commonwealth has its existence in the heavens.”

May we have grace to think of these things; may we own unreservedly our heavenly calling and citizenship; and may we find such satisfaction in Christ that the

aims and ambitions and pleasures of the world may not be ours. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live: yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal. ii. 20). So said Paul; may it be ours to say the same.

W. B.

## A SECOND BLESSING.

**W**E have sometimes heard of THE *second blessing* of believers, who claimed that they had got a special infilling of the Holy Ghost, sometimes calling it the baptism of the Holy Ghost. In listening to this talk we have felt a doubt, for we do not find its counterpart in the Scriptures. We stand in doubt of a system of blessing supposed to be scriptural, and yet boasting an experience and a language not according to the Bible.

We have even heard of earnest believers getting up a long while before day, climbing the mountain side, building their altar of stones, laying themselves upon it as an offering to God, and then as the sun rose, believing that something remarkable had happened to them, returning in an ecstatic mood, uplifted beyond the common ruck of mortals.

In all this we have our grave doubts. Even in this intense earnestness there may be the opening of the door for some special deceit of Satan, feeding their conceit in the feeling that they were different from other Christians and living on an elevated plane of thought and experience not given to the rank and file.

One thing is certain, a special filling of the Holy Spirit would occupy the believer with Christ, and not with a superior self, an elevated kind of Christian, in his own estimation, claiming to work miracles and wonders.

But having said all this, we gladly acknowledge that there is room for a second blessing, for a third blessing, for many many blessings from the hand of the Lord.

A second blessing of a particular sort is indicated in Romans xii. 1-2, of which we would speak. In the early part of Romans we get the truth as to the clearance that the Gospel brings to the believing sinner. He gets his sins forgiven, he learns what it is to be justified from all things, the love of God is shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Spirit given to him, he joys in God through our Lord Jesus Christ in the reconciliation that has come to him in the Gospel.

But there comes a moment in the history of the believer when he sees clearly that

this wonderful mercy of God has a claim upon his very body. Romans vi.—viii. teaches that not only the believer's sins are put away for ever, but that the nature that produced the sins, the fallen nature, called in the epistle *the flesh*, has been condemned and set aside by the cross of Christ. And further a new nature has been communicated to the believer, the power of which is the Holy Spirit alone, and consequently he is to walk "in newness of life."

Overwhelmed with the grandeur and scope of the blessing of the believer, the inspired apostle writes,

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable [intelligent] service.

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."

Dear young Christian friend, has there ever come a moment in your soul's history when you were moved by the sense of the abounding mercy of God in delivering you not only from your sins, but from the power of sin in the flesh and from the world that is so opposed to God that it slew His Ambassador, the Lord of glory? Have you

answered to this exhortation, and quietly and thankfully yielded your very body to the Lord for His will and service? Then henceforth you will not live unto yourself, but unto Him that died for you and rose again, to whom you owe everything for time and eternity. (See Corinthians v. 14, 15).

It is not a question of giving your spare time or spare money to the Lord, *but giving YOURSELF*. This, the apostle tells us, is reasonable, intelligent, rational. You are only answering to the claim that God has upon you.

If you have never done this, may this short article exercise you, and lead you to your knees to offer yourself, your body, as a living sacrifice to God. Believe me it will be no ordinary second blessing you will receive if this point in your soul's history is reached. You will be an infinite gainer in the transaction, a gainer every day of your life as you walk in the strength of this surrender, a strength that comes from the Holy Spirit alone.

It will be no longer resting in the blessings of the gospel, wonderful as that is, and growing in a deeper appreciation of them, but surrendering all that you have and are for the will of God, that you henceforth "LIVE UNTO HIM." The daily practice of this will set life in a different angle, and will bring the soul into such an

appreciation of Christ that the experience will not puff the believer up, but will humble; and in humbling lift him up spiritually. In short he will be Christ-centred and not self-centred. When a Christian is self-centred in a pious way, his condition is offensive to the Lord, and dangerous to himself, and harmful to others. When he is Christ-centred, he will have Christ before him in every way and be marked by self-forgetfulness in being occupied with Christ.

A. J. POLLOCK.

## RECONCILIATION.

*(Notes of an address on 2 Corinthians v.).*

**I**T is important to notice, in the first place, on whose side the reconciliation is needed. The old hymn which says,

“My God is reconciled,  
His pardoning voice I hear.”

completely misstates and reverses the case. The reconciliation was never needed on God's side. Romans v. 10 states it clearly enough, “When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son:” or, as our chapter puts it, “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.” He was not against us, but we were against Him.

Before God we are sinners and guilty, and thus exposed to His judgment. Also we stand at an immense moral distance

from Him. But besides this another thing came in by the fall, not only distance and death, but there was complete estrangement and utter alienation from God.

Adam not only became a sinner, but that disobedient act of his severed him instantly from the Fountain of light and love, and alienation and distance came in. Thus at one fell blow man was plunged into estrangement from God, and hatred of God. He was "alienated from the life of God" (Eph. iv. 18). "Alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works" (Col. i. 21). Thus God utterly lost man. "Where art thou?" was His cry in Eden. And such was man's folly that he might have made his miserable state permanent by taking of the tree of life. How wise and full of grace was that act of God which closed the gate of Eden, lest man should eat and live for ever in that state!

This alienation, with its accompanying moral and spiritual darkness, made itself increasingly felt. When we come to Romans i. we get the full story of the downfall.

1. *They gave God up*, by changing His glory into an image made like man or the lower creation.

2. *They changed the truth of God into a lie*, in worshipping and serving the creature rather than the Creator.

3. *They did not like to retain God in their knowledge at all.* Satan had tempted by holding out wisdom and knowledge as a bait, but as a matter of fact, "their foolish heart was darkened," and further, "professing themselves to be wise, they became fools."

4. Consequently, *God gave them up to their darkness and folly and corruption.*

All this shows what a terrible thing alienation is. The further from God that man can get, the better he likes it. It shows too that reconciliation is an absolute necessity. In no other way can God and man be together according to the wish of God's heart.

Now since man does not want God, since he does not wish to entertain the thought of Him in his mind—would rather imagine that He does not exist—it is evident that the first approach must be from God's side, if reconciliation is to be brought about at all. God has taken the initiative. He was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, as we have seen.

God's proposition was to bring alienated and estranged man back to Himself, and that in such a way that He can find His perfect satisfaction in having him near Him, and also that man may joy in God. This is God's present triumph in the Gospel!

Not only is the distance to be removed, but the heart that once was filled with enmity should have God's love shed abroad in it.

All this necessitated the Cross. God was truly in Christ and reconciling, in His incarnation. That was the first step; but in the presence of it man only declared his utter hatred. Then came the Cross, where God's judgment on man was expressed. He could not have man back and wink at his sin. There must be the absolute removal of everything connected with us in which God could not find His pleasure. "Our old man is crucified with Him." (Rom. vi. 6).

The distance had been expressed by the closed gate which separated man from Eden. At a later period it was expressed by the veil of the temple, which showed there was no admission to the presence of God. Now the Just One must suffer for the unjust, that they may be brought to God. He went into the distance in His holy soul, and endured it all.

The question of our trespasses was really a secondary thing. They were only in existence through the condition that gave birth to them. Lawlessness had come in where subjection and obedience would have been, had man remained in his true relationship with God, as creature before a Creator.

Therefore God takes steps designed to remove the *condition*, and not only to deal with the *conduct*. This was accomplished when Christ who knew no sin was made sin for us. We have been reconciled, "in the body of His flesh, through death." (Col. i. 22).

On this basis we are brought near to God. Such is the greatness of God's triumph. Once we were a grief to the heart of God, but now brought near He finds pleasure in our company. Once we hated Him, and desired to banish every thought of Him from our hearts: now we are delighted to draw near for, "we joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received with reconciliation" (Rom. vi. 11, *margin*). In the world of course it is still true that "there is none that seeketh after God," that all are "gone out of the way." It is still a fact that the more a man thinks he can remove the distance that separates him from God, the more he hates God's way of removing it.

Thus we are brought back to God upon an entirely new footing. The parable concerning the prodigal son illustrates it. He was not only at home, but also kissed and robed and sandalled, and that was the signal for all the feasting and merriment of the father's house. Even the first sign of return fills all heaven with joy and rejoicing; for,

“there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.”

And we rejoice too! Is it not wonderful that where once nothing but sin and alienation and hatred were, we now find the Holy Ghost and the love of God. For, “the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.”

ART. CUTTING.

## OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

(*Romans iv.* 1—*v.* 10).

Owing to the length of this epistle we have made our remarks briefer and more condensed than usual. It will therefore be more than ever necessary to refer to the Scripture itself as you read this article.

**T**HE fourth chapter is practically a parenthesis. In verse 28 of chapter iii. the conclusion is reached that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. To exactly the same point are we brought back in verse 1 of chapter v., and then—but not till then—does the Apostle carry us on further into the blessings of the Gospel. In chapter iv. he develops at considerable length certain Old Testament scriptures which support his thesis, that before God a man is justified by faith alone.

When, in chapter iii., the Apostle aimed at convincing the Jew of his sinfulness, that

he equally with the Gentile was subject to the judgment of God, he clinched his argument by quoting what the law had said. Now the point is to prove that justification is by faith, with the deeds of the law excluded, and again the Old Testament is appealed to. In days of long ago the faith of the Gospel was anticipated; and this was the case, whether before the law was given, as in the case of Abraham, or after it was given, as in the case of David.

The first question asked is, What about Abraham? He is spoken of as "the father of circumcision," in verse 12, and as such the Jew boasted very greatly in him. He was also "the father of all that believe," as verse 11 states. Had he been justified by works he would have had something in which to glory, but not *before God*. Note the two words italicized, for they plainly indicate that the point of this passage is, what is valid before God and not what is valid before men. Herein lies an essential difference between this chapter and James ii., where the word is, "Shew me thy faith" (verse 18). We may also point out that whereas Paul shows that the works *of the law* must be excluded, James insists that the works *of faith* must be brought in.

We may put the matter in a nutshell thus:—Before God a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law; whereas, to be accepted as justified before men, the

faith that is professed must evidence its vitality by producing the works of faith.

The case is very clear as to both Abraham and David. We have but to turn to Genesis xv. on the one hand, and to Psalm xxxii. on the other, in order to see that faith was the way of their justification and that works were excluded. The wonder of the Gospel is that God is presented as, "Him that justifieth the ungodly." The law contemplated nothing more than this, that the judges, "shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked" (Deut. xxv. 1). That the ungodly should be justified was not contemplated. But this is what God does in the Gospel, on the basis of the work of Christ, since "Christ died for the ungodly." This opens the door into blessing for sinners such as ourselves.

We get the expression, "this blessedness," in verse 9. It refers to faith being "counted for righteousness," or "reckoned for righteousness," or righteousness being "imputed." These, and similar expressions, occur a number of times in the chapter. What do they mean? Whether referring to Abraham or David or to ourselves who believe to-day, they mean that God accounts us as righteous before Him in view of our faith. We must not imagine that all virtue resides in our faith. It does not. But faith establishes contact with the work of Christ, in which all the virtue does

reside. In that sense faith justifies. Once that contact is established and we stand before God in all the justifying virtue of the work of Christ, we are of necessity justified. It could not righteously be otherwise. God holds us as righteous in view of our faith.

The question raised in verse 9 is this:— Is this blessedness for the Jew only or is it also for the Gentile who believes? The Apostle knew right well the determined way in which the bigoted Jew sought to place all the condemnation upon the Gentile while reserving all the blessing for himself. The answer is that the case of Abraham, in whom they so much boasted, proves that it is for ALL. Abraham was justified before he was circumcised. Had the order been reversed, the Jew might have had some ground for such a contention. As things were, he had none. Circumcision was only a sign, a seal of the faith which justified Abraham.

Abraham then in his justification stood clean outside the law. The law indeed only works wrath, as verse 15 says. There was plenty of sin before the law came in, but there was not transgression. To transgress is to offend by stepping over a clearly defined and forbidden boundary. When the law was given the boundary was definitely raised, and sin became transgression. Now "sin is not imputed when there is no law"

(v. 13). That is, so long as the evil had not been definitely forbidden God did not put the evil down to man's account, as He does when the prohibition has been issued. This then was the work of the law. But long before the law was given Abraham had been justified by faith. Does not this display how God delights in mercy? Justification was clearly indicated four hundred years before the urgent need of it was manifested by the law being given.

“Therefore it is of faith that it might be by grace.” Had it been by works it would have been a matter of debt and not grace, as verse 4 told us. On the principle of faith and grace the blessing is made “sure to all the seed ;” that is, the true spiritual seed of Abraham or in other words, true believers. For Abraham is, “the father of us all.” “US all” be it noted—ALL true believers.

This fact being established, the last nine verses of chapter iv. apply the principles of Abraham's justification to the believer of to-day.

Abraham's faith had this peculiarity, that it was centred in God as the One who was able to raise the dead. If we turn to Genesis xv. we discover that he believed God when the promise was made as to the birth of Isaac. He believed that God would raise up a living child from parents who, as regards the process of reproduction, were dead.

He believed in hope when it was against all natural hope that such a thing should be.

Had Abraham been weak in faith he would have considered all the circumstances, which were against it. He would have felt that the promise was too great and consequently have staggered at it. He did neither. He took God at His word with the simplicity of a little child. He believed that God would do what He had said He would do. And this, be it noted, is what here is called strong faith. Strong faith then is not so much the faith that performs miracles as that faith which implicitly trusts God to do what He has said, even though all appearances and reason and precedent should be against it.

Now these things have not been written for Abraham's sake alone but also for us. The same principles apply exactly. There is however one important difference. In Abraham's case he believed that God *would* raise up life out of death. We are not asked to believe that God *will* do it, but that He *has done it*, by raising up Jesus our Lord from the dead. How much simpler to believe that He has done it, when He has done it, than to believe that He will do it, when as yet He has not done it. Bearing this in mind it is easy to see that as regards the texture or quality of faith we cannot hope to produce as fine an article as Abraham did.

Where however the case of Abraham is far surpassed is in the glorious facts that are presented to our faith, the glorious light in which God had made Himself known. Not now the God who will raise up an Isaac, but the God who has raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. Christ, who was delivered for our offences and was raised again for our justification, is presented as the Object of our faith. And by Him we believe in God.

It is possible of course to believe on Him that raised up the Lord Jesus, without at all realizing what is involved in this wonderful fact. The last verse of the chapter states what is involved in it. Let us pay great attention to it, and so make sure that we take it in. Twice in the verse does the word "our" occur. That word signifies believers, and believers only.

Jesus our Lord has died. But He did not die for Himself, but for us. Our offences were in view. He was the Substitute, and assuming all the liabilities incurred, He was delivered up to judgment and death on their account.

He has been raised again by the act of God. But it is equally true that His resurrection was not simply a personal matter, and on His own account. We still view Him as standing on our behalf, as our Representative. He was raised representatively for us. God raised Him with our

justification in view. His resurrection was most certainly *His own personal vindication* in the face of the hostile verdict of the world. Equally certainly it was *our justification* in the face of all the offences, which apart from His death were lying to our account.

His death was the complete discharge of all our dread account. His resurrection is the receipt that all is paid, the God-given declaration and proof that we are completely cleared. Now justification is just that—a complete clearance from all that which once lay against us. Being then justified by faith we have peace with God. We must read on from the end of chapter iv. into chapter v. without any break whatever.

We may use the words, “justified by faith,” in two senses. By simple faith in Christ, and in God who raised Him from the dead, we are justified, and this whether we have the happy assurance of it in our hearts or not. But then, in the second place, it is by faith that we know that we are justified. Not by feelings nor by visions or other subjective impressions, but by faith in God and in His Word.

As the result of our justification we have peace with God. Observe the distinction between this and what is stated in Colossians i. 20. Christ has made peace by the blood of His cross. Thereby He removed

every disturbing element. This He did once for all, and because that work is done peace becomes the enjoyed portion of each who is justified by faith. We enter into it one by one. When Paul knew by faith that he was justified, peace with God was his. When I knew that I was justified peace was mine. When you knew, peace was yours. And until we did know peace was not ours. Instead of having peace with God we had doubts and fears, and probably plenty of them.

Peace stands first amongst the blessings of the Gospel. It heads the list but does not exhaust the list. Faith not only conducts us into peace but also gives us access into the grace or favour of God. We *are* in the favour of God. We know it and enter upon the enjoyment of it by faith. It is not stated here what the character of this favour is. We know, from Ephesians i. 6, that it is the favour of the Beloved. No favour could be higher and more intimate than that.

This favour is a present reality. We shall never be more in favour than we are now, though our enjoyment of it will be greatly increased in the day when our hope materializes. Our hope is not merely glory but the glory *of God*. Who would not rejoice with such a hope as that !

As to all the guilt of our past we are justified and at peace with God. As to

the present we stand in divine favour. As to the future we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. But what about the difficulties and tribulations which bestrew our way to glory?

In these too we rejoice, wonderful to say: for the word translated "glory" in verse 3 is the same as that translated "rejoice" in the preceding verse. Paul is still setting before us the proper and normal effects of the Gospel in the hearts of those who receive it. The secret of our ability to rejoice in that, which naturally is so distasteful to us, is that we know what it is designed to work.

Tribulations are not in themselves pleasant but grievous, yet they help to set in motion a whole sequence of things which are most excellent and blessed—patience, experience, hope, the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Tribulations, to the believer, have become a set of spiritual gymnastics which greatly promote the development of his spiritual constitution. Instead of being against us they are turned into a source of profit. What a triumph of the grace of God this is!

Did you ever meet some dear old Christian who at once struck you as being full of calm endurance, very experienced, filled with hope in God, and irradiating love of a divine sort? Then you would find pretty surely that such an one had gone through many a tribulation with God. Paul recog-

nized this and hence he rejoiced in tribulation. If we see things in this light—which is the true light—we shall rejoice in them too.

You will notice that here, for the first time in this unfolding of the Gospel, the Holy Spirit is mentioned. The Apostle does not pause to tell us exactly *how* He is received. He only refers to the fact that He *is* given to believers, and that His happy work is the shedding abroad in our hearts of the love of God. Ephesians i. 13 shows us plainly that He is given when we have believed the Gospel of our salvation; and that of course is just the point to which we have been conducted at the beginning of Romans v. Very appropriately therefore the first mention of the Spirit comes in here.

Our hearts would be dark indeed were not the bright beams of the love of God shed abroad in them by the Holy Spirit. As it is they are bright indeed. Yet the light that shines into them has its source outside them. If we start searching our own hearts for the love, we make a great mistake; as great a mistake as if we tried searching the bright face of the moon to find the sun. True, moonlight is reflected sunlight—second-hand sunlight. Still the sun is not there. Just so all the light of the love of God which shines in the heart of a believer shines from the great sun which is outside himself. And that sun is the death of Christ.

In verses 6-8 therefore His death is again set before us; and this time as the final and never to be repeated expression of the love of God—a love which rises far above anything of which man is capable. God loved us when there was nothing about us to love, when we were without strength, ungodly and sinners, and even enemies, as verse 10 reminds us.

That death has brought us not only justification but reconciliation also. The guilt of our sins has been removed, and also the alienation which had existed between us and God. That being so a twofold salvation is bound to be ours.

A day of wrath is coming. Twice before in the epistle has this been intimated (i. 18; ii. 5). We shall be saved from that day through Christ. From other Scriptures we know that He will save us from it by taking us from the scene of wrath before the wrath bursts.

Again, being reconciled we shall be saved by His life. This is a salvation which we need continually, and shall need as long as we are in the world. He lives on high for us His people. When Moses went up the hill and interceded for Israel they were saved from their foes (See, Exod. xvii.). Just so are we saved by our Lord, who lives in the presence of God for us.

F. B. HOLE.

## “WHO IS WISE ?”

“**W**HAT a place this is for backsliders! ”  
Such was the part of a missionary report which caught my eye and saddened my spirit.

A backslider is one who has belied the truth which he once professed, and in which he found pleasure—one who has denied the Lord.

What is it that leads to backsliding? Idolatry of some kind or other. Something has been allowed to usurp Christ's proper place in the heart—the love of money, pleasure, worldly friends and associations; or it may be neglect of prayer, reading the Word of God in private, or any conscious unfaithfulness to Him. It may be through a yielding to infidel tendencies and a desire to appear “*brainy*” before others. The causes may be many, but the disease is fearfully common to-day.

What place was this where backsliders were so numerous?

Well, it was out in the Colonies, where life was vigorous and the gamble for wealth strenuous. Money, or rather the love of it,

was playing mischief with the faith of believers, and causing them to backslide. How sad to think of souls, once constrained by the love of Christ, being overcome by that of money! Sorry exchange, as will be discovered ere long!

The judgment seat of Christ will show their awful folly and cause bitter remorse in the hearts of all such. "Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content," says the ever-wise book of God (see 1 Tim. vi. 10). But these people—these idolaters—flung up the treasure of contentment for the misery of seeking to be rich; they became backsliders, and brought reproach on the Christ who bought them.

"What a place this is for backsliders!" But can you tell me of any place, within your ken, where they are not to be found? Alas! they abound everywhere; and—alas! that we should have to say it—they are a standing shame and dishonour to the name of the Lord. Their end is destruction, their God is their belly, they glory in their shame, they mind earthly things (Phil. iii. 19). That is the secret, they mind *earthly things!* That has caused their spiritual ruin, their destruction. Instead of "setting their mind on things above" they have concentrated their thoughts and energies on earthly things. They have fallen.

Oh! sad but common spectacle!

That spectacle is to be seen everywhere to-day, and not in one place alone. I have often wondered, when looking at the usual audiences at gospel meetings, what proportion the backsliders hold to the entire company!

Preachers frequently say that such companies are divided into two classes, the saved and the unsaved. May they not omit this third one?

Then, are backsliders not saved?

Have we any spiritual right to say that they are?

Then, are they lost?

Thank God, they are not yet condemned. More we cannot say. The issue lies with themselves.

We are told, every one of us, to “make our calling and election sure” (2 Peter i. 10), and this is just the thing the backslider has not done. Had he been faithful to the Lord and to his own spiritual interests he would certainly not have backslidden.

My reader, you know how your own spirit treats this test; you know how far this “making sure” has been your chief object, or whether you have grieved the Holy Spirit of God by carelessness in walk and way, in secret and in public. Certain it is that if

all who profess conversion were, instead of backsliding and hiding their lights under bushels, conspicuous by their fidelity to our blessed but rejected Lord, it would be like a return of the early days of Christianity, of power, of unity, of love, of holiness and of immense blessing. It would be seen who was who; the ranks of the world would be greatly thinned, and those of Christ augmented. His sacred name would not be so sadly trailed in the mire, nor His cause so justly derided. That name would be exalted; the Holy Spirit would act in power; the saints would be in holy and happy harmony—as men that wait for their Lord—the testimony of the gospel would be in corresponding freshness and blessing. The backslider little knows the amount of evil he does; it is disastrous. The true-hearted follower of Christ has no idea of the good that he is accomplishing. He may oft be discouraged, and feel that his weary labour seems in vain; but far otherwise.

"Little acts we had forgotten  
He will tell us were for Him."

Keep on at these "little acts," which have His glory for their object. They are most prolific. They would prevent backsliding. May I ask my readers very kindly to read over and meditate upon the last chapter of the prophet Hosea?

"Thy life of sin has been  
A toilsome path, without one cheering ray;  
Now on thy Father lean,  
And He will guide thee in a better way."

Come, leave the desert land,  
 And all the husks on which thy soul has fed;  
 And trust the loving Hand,  
 That offers thee a feast of living Bread.”

J.W.S.

## “ AND IT WAS WINTER.”

**T**HE Lord had been speaking of Himself as the good Shepherd. He had entered the Jewish sheepfold for this very purpose, that He might lead His sheep *out*, whilst He had other sheep, “not of this fold,” Gentile sheep, which had never known the bondage of the law. These were to be gathered with those who had been led *out*, and formed into one flock with one Shepherd.

Here we seem to catch the refrain of the *ones* of Scripture. John says, “ONE flock, ONE Shepherd.” Paul says, “ONE body, ONE Spirit, One hope of our calling, ONE Lord, ONE faith, ONE baptism, ONE God and Father of all.” (Ephesians iv. 4-6.) John speaks of the Good Shepherd *calling* His own sheep by name, Paul speaks of the hope of the Christian’s *calling*. John speaks of one flock composed of sheep from both Jews and Gentiles. Paul speaks of the middle wall of partition being broken down, and how of the twain, Jew and Gentile, one new man was created, so making peace.

When the Lord closed His discourse it was to find that His words had produced a division among His hearers. Some said that He had a devil and was mad, so little could they understand the wonderful words of blessing that flowed from His lips.

Others thought otherwise, and said, "Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?"

At this point the sacred narrative goes on to say, "And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, *and it was winter*. And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch" (John x. 22, 23). The Bible is not to be read like any other book. It stands by itself. Most books need reading only once, and many it is a waste of time to read at all. The Bible is a life-long study, its meaning never fully grasped, the better understood it is the more interesting it becomes. It is the Book that we need when we first enter the Christian path. It is the Book that is last in the hands of the dying saint.

We read it again and again. Words, that we have read often and thought we had understood, suddenly reveal depths of meaning that we never suspected. The Bible does not turn aside to tell you that this is wonderful and that is wonderful. Human books do. Not so the Scriptures.

When God flung the mighty Himalayas against the sky He did not write a label

upon them to tell us that they were majestic. When He swathed the mighty oceans He did not inform us that they were vast. When He wrote the Book of books, the Bible, the Holy Scriptures, He does not need to tell us how wonderful they are. God does not yield His secrets to the superficial and the lazy.

We venture to think that the two verses we have just drawn attention to are an instance of what we have just been saying. We do not think that the verses are intended simply to describe the locality and the time that marked this incident in the Lord's life. It is not a mere question of geography and chronology. We think the words have a wealth of meaning taken in another sense.

The most wonderful city in the world was Jerusalem. It was the city of the great King. It will yet be the metropolis of the millennial earth. The most wonderful building in it was the Temple. It was the centre of the only religious ritual that had its origin in God's ordering. One of the most wonderful parts of the building was Solomon's Porch.

We have the most sacred city, the most sacred building in it, a most wonderful part of that building, the anniversary of the most wonderful moment in the history of that building, that of the dedication when the priests could not stand in the building be-

cause the glory of the Lord filled it in an overwhelming fashion.

And now we have the surpassingly wonderful PERSON walking there. Shall we have the priests paying homage to the One greater than the Temple, greater than the sacrifices, greater than the types and shadows? All this that lay before His eye was but the shadow. He was the SUBSTANCE. Without Him they would never have been, just as a shadow could not be without the substance that casts it.

And yet He was unknown. He was reviled, called a Samaritan, an outcast, charged with being demon-possessed, no priest to do Him homage. No wonder we have the sentence, "And it was winter."

Truly it was spiritual winter. Not a leaf on the dead tree of ritualism; the shell had no kernel, the profession had no reality, ordinances were without satisfaction.

It shows how far forms and ceremonies may be made to contribute to the flesh and be utterly unavailing for the purpose for which they were ordained. All was absolute emptiness and sterility.

It was indeed spiritual winter in that system, whose leaders were ready to clamour, "Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him." All fulness lay in Christ. If any wanted the blessing of Jehovah he had perforce to leave the sacred city and the gorgeous building, and hie him to the One,

who was rejected of men, but chosen of God and precious.

To-day it is the same thing. Winter comes with its icy blasts wherever truth is held in the mere letter, and not holding the heart of the believer in its grip and in its relation to the Son of God. Oh! that we might be kept in living touch with Him, who said, "Without Me ye can do nothing" (John xv. 5).

A. J. POLLOCK.

## THE DANGER POINT.

THE song of Moses (Deut. xxxii. and Rev. xv. 3) is a wonderful summary of God's ways with Israel. It gives the sovereign call of that nation on God's part, their perverseness, their subjugation by enemies in consequence, and their dispersion; the ultimate overthrow of those enemies, and the recovery of both land and people through sovereign mercy, to enjoy with the spared nations the favour of Jehovah.

But to every Spirit-taught heart the song of the Lamb (Rev. xv. 3) has to be added to the song of Moses to make the fulfilment of the latter righteously possible.

"The river of God's grace,  
Through righteousness supplied,  
Is flowing o'er the barren place  
Where Jesus died."

It is in the song of Moses, and after the introductory paragraph indicative of the purpose of God for them (vv 1-14), that we have the words, "But Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked." This verse indicates the danger point in a soul's history, or in the history of God's people ; the point whence radiates every feature of departure and disaster among saints.

The meaning of Jeshurun is not perhaps definitely obtainable. It appears to lie between "upright ones," and "beloved of Jehovah." We start thus with God's thoughts of His people, the beloved of His heart, qualified to be here on earth in uprightness in full consistency with their calling. Every true believer in Christ is not only redeemed from all condemnation and secured for ultimate glory, but is set up with a new life and nature, the work of God's holy Spirit ; and the Holy Spirit Himself indwelling, to enable him to be consistent with all that God teaches him concerning Christ.

"But"—begins our verse,—"*but* Jeshurun waxed fat." Evidently God had not failed Israel as to abundance of supply. Verses 13 and 14 give a picture of the land of blessing and of its resources, a perfect Elysium of delight and food. Even its very rocks—usually (apart from God's blessing) the most unyielding of substances—seemed to roll out honey and oil ; while increase of

the fields, butter of kine, milk of sheep, rams of Bashan, goats, fat of kidneys of wheat, the pure blood of the grape, all told of the wealth of God's provision for them.

"But Jeshurun *waxed fat.*" How easy it is, and yet how perilous ; the very wealth of favour which God has provided for all Christians, and of which all may so freely partake, to become perverted in our enjoyment of it, so that it ministers to our self-aggrandisement and self-importance. "Unto *us* is this land given in possession" say these advanced ones of themselves (Ezek. xi. 15), while saying to others not so advanced. "Get you far from the Lord." You have no part with *us*, they seem to say. To *US* has God given all this ministry of His bounty, not to you. It is the point of danger, to go on eating and feeding and indulging appetite, most appreciative of good food and rich provision, but making it minister to our own self-importance. Perhaps one of the greatest tests of grace is to be greatly privileged and yet to be lowly in mind and patient with others.

The verse proceeds, "*and kicked.*" This is an early, if not the earliest, sign of departure. Instead of lowliness, and meekness, forbearing one another in love ; instead of quiet submission to and acquiescence in the will and way of the Lord, there is

the substitution of a will and way of our own. There is impatience of spirit, a determination by hook or by crook to get rid of what resists our idea of things, a resistance to authority or correction, as well as a fretful impatience that will not wait for the direction and handling of the Lord. As we accentuate our self-importance, there is an increasing desire to make things yield to *our* will, and we do not like to be pulled up and corrected ; we kick against truth that clashes with our accepted notions, or that tends to damp our pride and upset our self-complacency. We believe that our brethren ought without question to accept *our* version, and bow to *our* application of things. Our "liberty" we think consists in our overriding all that lifts itself up against *Us*.

Lack of exercise contributes to the accumulation of fat, but the only safe exercise for Christians lies within the limit of the will of God. When the exercise is the doing of our own will, and insistence on our own way, it is the precursor of open departure and the portent of disaster.

Hence "*he forsook God that made him.*" There are different circles of authority which the Christian is called upon to recognise. He is set as a child under parents. He is as a subject before powers that be. He is, if a young believer, to be submissive to those whom Scripture would honour as elders

in the faith, who are examples to the flock and teach the behaviour that is proper to the house of God. But above all, the highest privilege is to give GOD His place. The fear of God, the trembling at His word, is the most urgent of all forms of submission and subjection. Concentration upon self, or upon ourselves, is certain to be accompanied by increasing moral distance from God. There is claim to liberty—often under specious pleas—always a kind of liberty that permits of our choosing when and how we serve ; less and less regard to the whole economy of God's will. In point of fact no one has less liberty for the exercise of his own will or predilections, than the Lord's servant. He is the Lord's, body and soul.

“ I have not sent these prophets,” (Jer. xxiii. 21.) had to be said of those who professed to serve Him, “ yet they ran.” Much activity, yet not sent there by the Lord, whose will should have contented them. Thus while professing to be His servants, they did their own will, dreamed their own dreams, chose their own messages, and in truth “ forsook God which made ” them. Where a servant *ceases* to be consistent under any plea with the truth the Lord has made known unto him, he has ceased to be practically one of the “ upright ones ” ; he has so far forsaken the God that made him. Made him for what ? Surely to be the instrument of His will, the vessel of His plea-

sure, the witness to His Name (Deut. xxxii. 3, 4).

Our verse adds, "*and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation.*" Where there is a diminishing sense of obligation to be held by the reins of God's sovereign will and pleasure, there is lessened the desire for salvation from the present order of things. There is more and more disposition to accredit the movements by which men propose to accelerate the work of God. There are efforts which appear most commendable in the judgment of many Christians, efforts that group saints together for evangelistic and other purposes, into which are easily drawn the young and eager spirits, who tire of conflict and controversy, and long—sometimes with very commendable motives—to "get on with the work." There are pilgrims and crusaders, there are evangelical unions, missions, and circles of many kinds, all of which we may conclude are to draw out the best in a Christian, and are calculated to provide channels for the activities in which he would devotedly engage. But, however outwardly commendable by our minds, the reader must forgive me if I express the conviction that the form of these movements lays them open to the saddening charge, they "*lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation.*"

Do we really esteem that we can wisely add by these moulds and movements to the

provision GOD has made for the conduct of His testimony and service? Have we discovered in truth that it is a wise policy to paint the rose to make it the more beautiful? or to add our concoctions to God's prescriptions for His assembly and for His service, to make them more successful?

To do so must surely imply that we lightly esteem the wonderful adequate, all-sufficient and effectual instructions of the all-wise God. He is the Rock of our salvation, from whom flows blessed, perfect grace and supply for every need; stable, solid, real, for the youngest, most eager and active, as well as for the most mature, of the saints of God. People who do not know the Scriptures nor the power of God, may unwisely create these movements to supplement God's instructions for us; but is it not in result an impeachment of God's wisdom, and a challenge to all that He teaches us of the All-sufficiency of Christ, and the power of His Holy Spirit.

The song of Moses pursues the early departures of Israel to their bitter end, and then shews how the aboundings of God's mercy will secure their blessing and His own glory. But it is well for us to ask ourselves, Are we set on doing our own will, or the will of God as expressed in Christ, and recorded in His word? While delighting in all the amazing tokens of God's sovereign love and favour, are we also hum-

bly seeking to be among His "upright ones" who are restfully content with His wise will, and as broken in under His discipline desirous of being consistent with all He has taught us? May we answer the questions to our God.

W. H. WESTCOTT.

## OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

(*Romans v. 9—vi. 4*).

Owing to the length of this epistle we have made our remarks briefer and more condensed than usual. It will therefore be more than ever necessary to refer to the Scripture itself as you read this article.

**T**HE Epistle opened by telling us that the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one who believes. We now discover that when we speak of being saved we are using a word of very large meaning. It is not only true that we have been saved by belief of the Gospel, but also that we shall be saved from the spiritual dangers and conflicts of this present age, and from the wrath of the age to come.

In verses 9—11 we get not only salvation but also justification and reconciliation. These are words of greater definiteness and more limited meaning. There is no future aspect in connection with them. They are entirely present realities for the believer. "*Now* justified by His blood" (ver. 9). "*We have now* received the reconciliation (ver. 11). We shall never be more justified than we are to-day. We shall never be

more reconciled than we are to-day, though we shall presently have a keener enjoyment of the reconciliation which has been effected. But we shall be more fully saved than we are to-day, when in the age to come we are in glorified bodies like Christ.

Believing the Gospel, we receive the reconciliation to-day, and consequently are able to find our joy in God. Once we feared Him and shrank from His presence, as did Adam when he hid behind the trees of the Garden. Now we make our boast in Him and rejoice. And this is ~~is~~ all God's own doing through our Lord Jesus Christ. What a triumph of grace it is !

Thus far the Gospel has been set before us in relation to our sins. Our actual offences have been in view, and we have discovered the way God has of justifying us from them and bringing us into His favour. There was more than this involved in our fallen condition however. There was what we may call the racial question.

For our racial head we have to go back to Adam, and to Adam in his *fallen* condition, for only when fallen did he beget sons and daughters. His fall came about by an act of sin, but that act induced a state or condition of sin which permeated his very being. Thereby his whole spiritual constitution was altered so fundamentally as to affect all his descendants. He could only beget children "in his own likeness, after

his image," (Gen. v. 3)—the likeness and image of a fallen man. Heredity of this sort is a terrible fact, borne witness to by Scripture. Does God in the Gospel propose any remedy for this awful blight which lies upon the human race? Can He deal with the nature from which the acts of sin spring: with the root which produces the hideous fruits, as well as with the fruits themselves?

He can. Indeed, He has done so, and chapter v. from verse 12 onwards, unfolds to us the effects of what He has done. Just what He has done is not stated in so many words, though it is plainly inferred. The passage is admittedly a difficult one, and this is one element of its difficulty. Another element in its difficulty is that in several verses the translation is obscure, and even slightly defective. A third difficulty is that this side of matters is one that all too often is overlooked; and, where that has been the case, we plunge into unfamiliar waters and easily get out of our depth.

To begin with, notice that verses 13 to 17 are a parenthesis, and are printed as such, being enclosed in brackets. To get the sense we read on from verse 12 to verse 18, when at once we can see that the main drift of the passage is the contrast between one man who sinned, involving others in the results of his transgression, and Another who accomplished a righteousness, into the blessed effects of which others

are brought. The whole passage emphasizes a tremendous contrast, a contrast which centres in Adam on the one hand and Christ on the other. If Adam stands at the head of a fallen race lying under death and condemnation, Christ is the Head of a new race standing in righteousness and life.

We may say then that what God has done is to raise up a new Head for men in the Lord Jesus Christ. Before He formally took the place of Head He accomplished perfect righteousness by obedience unto death. By virtue of His death and resurrection believers stand no longer connected with Adam but with Christ. They have been, so to speak, grafted into Christ. They are no longer in Adam but "in Christ." This is the underlying fact which the passage infers, whilst it elaborates the glorious consequences flowing therefrom.

Look again at verses 12, 18 and 19. Particularly scrutinize verse 18. If you have Darby's New Translation read it in that. You will see that the words inserted in italics in the Authorized Version can come out, and that the marginal reading is the better : also that the twice repeated word, "upon" should be rather, "towards." The contrast is between the one offence of Adam, the bearing of which was condemnation towards all men, and the one righteousness of Christ, completed in His death, the bearing of which is justification of life towards all men.

We ponder this quietly for a few moments, and then probably observe to ourselves that though all men have come under the condemnation not all by any means have come under the justification. Exactly, for this verse only states the general bearing of the respective acts, and it is true that, as far as God's intention in the death of Christ is concerned, His death is for all. The next verse goes on to the realized effects of the respective acts, and only many—or more accurately, “the many”—are in view.

By “the many” we understand those, and only those, who are under the respective headships. In Adam's case “the many” does of course cover all men, for by nature we are all of his race. In the case of Christ not all men are of His race, but only all believers. All men were constituted sinners by Adam's disobedience. All believers are constituted righteous by Christ's obedience, even unto death.

So in the three verses we are considering we have this sequence. On the one hand, one man Adam, one offence, all men constituted sinners, all sinning, consequently death and condemnation upon all. On the other hand, one Man Christ, one righteousness in obedience unto death, those under His Headship constituted righteous in justification of life.

Now observe the five verses included in the parenthesis. The first two of these meet

a difficulty that might arise in the minds of those very familiar with the law. Adam sinned against a definite commandment, hence his sin was a transgression. After that some 2500 years had to roll away before the law of Moses was given, when once more transgression became possible. Between those points there was no transgression, for there was no law to transgress. Yet there was sin universally, as proved by the universal reign of death. The practical difference lay here, that sin is not "imputed" when there is no law: that is it is not put to our account in the same way. Only those who have known the law will be judged by the law, as we saw when reading chapter ii.

This being admitted, it is still true that sin and death have reigned universally. All Adam's posterity are involved in his fall. This being so, the contrast between Adam and Christ is worked out in verses 15 to 17. Each verse takes up a different detail, but the general point is stated at the beginning of verse 15; viz., the free gift through Christ in no sense falls short of the offence through Adam, indeed it goes beyond it.

In verse 15 the word many occurs twice just as we noticed it does in verse 19. In this verse too it is more accurately, "the many," that is, those who come under the respective headships. Adam brought in death upon all those under his headship,

which as a matter of fact means all men without exception. Jesus Christ has brought in the grace of God and the free gift of grace to the many who are under Him; that is, to all believers.

Verse 16 brings in the contrast between condemnation and justification. In this connection the gift surpasses the sin. The condemnation was brought in by one sin. The justification has been triumphantly wrought out by grace in the teeth of many offences.

A further contrast confronts us in verse 17. The condemnation and justification of the previous verse are what we may call the immediate effects. Immediately anyone comes under Adam he comes under condemnation. Immediately anyone comes under Christ he comes into justification. But what are the ultimate effects? The ultimate effect of Adam's sin was to establish a universal reign of death over his posterity. The ultimate effect of Christ's work of righteousness is to bring in for all who are His abundance of grace, and righteousness as a free gift, so that they may reign in life. Not only is life going to reign but we are going to reign in life. A most astounding thing surely! No wonder that the free gift is stated to go beyond the offence.

Verses 20 and 21 recapitulate and sum up what we have just seen. The law was

brought in to makè man's sin fully manifest. Sin was there all the time but when the law was given sin became very visible as positive transgression, and offence, definitely put down to man's account, abounded. The law was followed, after a due interval, by the grace which reached us in Christ. We can discern therefore three stages. First, the age before the law when there was sin though no transgression. Second, the age of law when sin abounded, rising to Himalayan heights. Third, the incoming of grace through Christ—grace which has risen up like a mighty flood overtopping the mountains of man's sins.

In the Gospel grace not only super-abounds, but it reigns. We who have believed have come under the benign sway of grace, a grace which reigns through righteousness, inasmuch as the cross was pre-eminently a work of righteousness. And the glorious end and consummation of the story is eternal life. Here the boundless vista of eternity begins to open out before us. We see the river of grace. We see the channel of righteousness, cut by the work of the cross, in which it flows. We see finally the boundless ocean of eternal life, into which it flows.

And all is "by Jesus Christ our Lord." All has been wrought by Him. He is the Head under whom, as believers, we stand, and consequently the Fountain-head from whom all these things flow to us. It is be-

cause we are in His life that all these things are ours. Our justification is a justification of life, for in Christ we have a life which is beyond all possibility of condemnation—a life in which we are cleared not only from all our offences, but also from the state of sin in which we formerly lay as connected with Adam.

That which we have thus far learned of the Gospel from this epistle has been a question of what God has declared Himself to be on our behalf, that which He has wrought for us by the death and resurrection of Christ, and which we receive in simple faith. In it all God has been having, if we may so say, *His say* toward us in blessing. Chapter vi. opens with the pertinent question, "What shall *we say* then?"

This signalizes the fact that another line of thought is now about to open before us. Nothing can exceed the wonder of what God has wrought on our behalf, but what are we in consequence thereof going to be for Him? What is to be the believer's response to the amazing grace that has been shown? Is there through the Gospel the bringing in of a power which will enable the believer's response to be one worthy of God? As we open chapter vi. we begin to investigate these questions and to discover the way in which the Gospel sets us

free to spend lives of practical righteousness and holiness.

If men attain a merely head knowledge of the grace of God, their hearts remaining unaffected, they may easily turn grace into licence and say, "Well, if God's grace can abound over our sin, let us go on sinning that grace may go on abounding." Does the Gospel in any way countenance such sentiments? Not for one moment. The very reverse. It tells us plainly that we are dead to sin. How then can we still live in it? Once we were terribly alive to sin. Everything that had to do with our own lawless wills—with pleasing ourselves, in other words—we were keenly set on, whilst remaining absolutely dead to God and His things. Now an absolute reversal has taken place and we are dead to the sin to which formerly we were alive, and alive to the things to which formerly we were dead.

Have we been ignorant as to this, or only dimly conscious of it? It should not have been so, for the fact is plainly set forth in Christian baptism, a rite which lies at the threshold of things. Do we know, or do we not know, what our baptism means?

There is perhaps a previous question which ought to be raised. It is this, Have you been baptised? We ask it because there seems to be in some quarters distinct carelessness as to this matter, engendered we

suspect by the over-emphasis placed on it in former days. If we neglect it we do so to our very distinct loss. In baptism we are buried with Christ, as verse 4 states, and not to have been buried with Him is a calamity. Moreover, if not amongst "so many of us as were baptised" the Apostle's argument in verses 4 and 5 loses its force as far as we are concerned.

What then is the significance of baptism? It means identification with Christ in His death. It means that we are buried with Him, and that the obligation is placed upon us to walk in newness of life, even as He was raised up into a new order of things. This is its meaning and this the obligation it imposes, and our loss is great if we know it not. We greatly fear that the tremendous controversies which have raged over the manner and the mode and the subjects of baptism have led many to overlook entirely its *meaning*. Argumentations about baptism have been carried on in a very unbaptised way, so that no one would have thought the contestants "dead to sin."

Baptism is however a rite, an outward sign. It accomplishes nothing vital, and alas, millions of baptised persons will find themselves in a lost eternity. It points however to that which is vital in the fullest sense, even the Cross, as we shall see.

F. B. HOLE.

## ANSWER TO A CORRESPONDENT.

In 2 Timothy i. 18, speaking of Onesiphorus, Paul says, "The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day." Will you help us by stating what you believe to be the meaning of this Scripture?—GATESHEAD.

**A**LL that we know of Onesiphorus is contained in this passage. He often had so acted as to refresh Paul. He was in happy contrast to those of Asia who turned away from Paul, for he was not ashamed of his captive condition. Moreover, when in Rome his love and zeal took very active shape; he diligently sought for Paul in his imprisonment and found him, just as formerly he had in many things ministered to him in Ephesus days.

The Apostle, now in prison, can do nothing for Onesiphorus, save express his fervent desire and prayer on his behalf. That desire was twofold. First, that mercy might be shown to his household. Second, that he himself might find mercy at the Lord's hands in the coming day of glory.

We naturally feel interested to know just exactly what Paul had in his mind; but the fact is, we do *not* know. We may suppose that Onesiphorus was in some way separated from his household and that some calamity or trouble had come on him personally. That *may* be so. There was no doubt something in the Apostle's thoughts, of which we are purposely left in ignorance. It is useless speculating. It is indeed worse than useless for we can easily speculate ourselves into error—as some have done by *assuming* that Onesiphorus *must* have

been dead, and then finding in the words you quote authority for praying for the dead!

If we do not attempt to speculate, what can we learn from these words? Evidently this, that "in that day"—the day of the judgment seat of Christ—all that may be ours in the way of reward is to be viewed as an expression of "mercy."

Is not this an important point? We judge that it is. The "crown of righteousness" will be given by "the righteous Judge" (2 Tim. iv. 8), yet behind all lies *mercy*. There would have been no diligent service, no loving Christ's appearing, had not *mercy* taken the initiative with us and started all in motion.

That is why the saints will cast their crowns before the throne—the throne in which is to appear "a Lamb as it had been slain."

### CHASTENING.

**D**ESPISE it not! Faint not because of it! The Lord loves those that are His, and because they are in filial relationship to Him He deals with them accordingly; therefore it is said, "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth" (Heb. xii. 6). Endure it with confidence. Be exercised in faith through it. "Consider well" the One who endured the Cross. Rich results to His honour follow—profitable participation of His holiness and the peaceable fruits of righteousness.

H. J. V.

## “IN THE MIDST.”

*“For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.”* (Matt. xviii. 20.)

**T**HERE are times in one's Christian experience when some great truth of God comes home with irresistible power to the soul and leaves an impression there that can never be effaced. Such a time I recall in my experience in thinking afresh of these well-known words of the Lord.

I was a youth of eighteen at the time and an interest in the Lord's things had begun to awaken in my life. With some other young Christians I was listening to a very gifted and well-instructed servant of the Lord who had had nearly sixty years' knowledge of and practice of the truth. Suddenly he turned to where we were sitting and asked, "Would you young converts like to meet the Saviour?" And as he paused for a moment my heart answered, "Yes, nothing

could please me better than that." But he answered his own question for us and at the same time expressed our feelings exactly. He said, "I believe you would run fifty miles to meet your Saviour, but you have no need to do that, for He has said, 'Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.'" Pausing again to let this great saying have its full effect upon us, he proceeded, "When I go to the Lord's-day morning meeting I say to myself, '*I'm going to meet the Son of God.*'"

At that moment, and for the first time, the immensity of the privilege that lay within my reach broke upon me. I saw that our absent Lord had appointed a place where He could and would meet with those whose love to Him was enough to make them desire to meet Him ; and to-day, as then, I feel that nothing on earth can surpass this in blessedness. Things took on a new complexion for me from that hour.

I saw that there were two sides to my relationship with my Lord. There was first what He could do for me in His all-sufficient and ever-available grace. I had been learning a little of this, for He had saved me and was keeping me, and I know that He would hold me fast to the end, for so He had said, and He will never go back on His word ; but now another side of things seized my attention. I saw that it was my privilege to

be here for Him along with all who loved Him, and that I was to be gathered together with these unto His name. That the purpose of God was that those who love the Lord were to be His representatives during His absence, to carry on His interests and to do it together, and as such ; and when so gathered, He would meet them. His presence in the midst of them was to be their glory, and to give character to their gatherings ; in them He was to be supreme. This declaration of the Lord became to me a command, a command such as only love could give, yet a command kingly in its character that could not be ignored nor neglected without great spiritual loss.

Consider the meaning of His words : the now absent Lord declares that He will come to His disciples, to commune with them as His representatives on earth, for "in His name" means that ; that He, the great and eternal Lover, will keep tryst with the objects of His affection, and delight Himself in their responsive love, and receive their adoration. The Lord here presents the fact of His presence with His own in its most elementary form, yet He so states it as to leave room for the fullest expansion that may be required by the truth that was afterwards to be revealed by the Holy Ghost whom the Father sent in the name of the Lord Jesus. Could anything be more blessed, more inspiring, more comforting to the heart or strengthening to the faith than His pre-

sence in the midst ? And if it is so much to us, what must it be to Him who has made the appointment because His love cannot be satisfied with anything less than the company of those He loves ?

It is the Son of God who has said, " There am I." Us, whom He has redeemed by His blood, He has chosen as His companions ! Unspeakable grace this is ; and His love that passes all knowledge casts out all fear from our hearts before Him. Yet with what reverence we should greet Him ! How the great fact of His presence should affect us ! What manner of persons ought we to be, who go to meet the Son of God !

Now all who know anything about it will acknowledge that He must give character to any company into the midst of which He comes. He could not surely give His presence where this were impossible. Where Christ is, there He must be everything. Who would dare to say, " Nay," to that ? Then this means that not all who claim to have His presence have it because they claim to have it ; nor are all who claim to be gathered to His name necessarily gathered so in truth. There are certain indispensable conditions, and these His grace alone can produce ; let us not forget that it must be all of grace, else there would be room for spiritual pride and boasting, which things are an abomination to Him.

J. T. MAWSON.

## CHRISTIAN AMBITION.

(From Notes of an Address.)

THE three short Scriptures to which I want to draw your attention are as follows:—2 Corinthians v. 9; 1 Thessalonians iv. 10, 11; Romans xv. 20.

The translators of our invaluable Authorized Version for some reason used three different words, "labour," "study," "strived," to translate one word which occurs in the Greek of each of these passages. We are told that there is also in English one word which they might have used, but did not: the word, "ambition."

It is to that one word that I desire to call attention, and to emphasize in the three places where it occurs—the only three in the New Testament, I believe. Let us read the verses, supplying the word referred to.

"Wherefore *we are ambitious*, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of [acceptable to] Him."

"We beseech you . . . that *ye be ambitious* to be quiet, and to do your own business."

"Yea, so *have I been ambitious* to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation."

If these are matters the Apostle was anxious about as to himself and others, it

goes without saying they are important for us.

An ambitious man is usually a self-seeking man, whether for power or position, for wealth or fame. Self lies at the bottom of all his endeavours. Everything is looked at in the light of his objective, and is made to bend towards attaining it. But from the above Scriptures we can see that there is an ambition which may enter the Christian life, giving definite purpose and aim to it, without these self-seeking features.

A man of the world without ambition lives a purposeless and aimless life, and even by his fellows is not appreciated. The Apostle Paul lived no such life, nor did he desire that others should. Hear him say, in Philippians iii., "*One thing* I do," for like an athlete he was forgetting the things behind and stretching forward to reach the goal. Yet it is not enough to have desires for we read, "The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat" (Prov. xiii. 4). We must have energy to pursue and attain what we desire.

The Christian life is no mere drifting with wind and tide, but rather sailing against them. What are we set for? The great determining factor in reaching our object is not so much the strength of the gales as *the set of the sails*.

Our 'blessed Lord was wholly set for the will of God, and we know the strength of the gales that blew to drive Him from His course. It was as though all the winds of woe escaped from their caverns and rushed to hinder Him. But, "Thy will *be done*,"—cost what it may—was His answer to it all. Such was the lovely devotion of that lowly life of purpose. Let us then remember that it is not our environments but our purpose that will determine our course.

Now consider the first of our Scriptures. The Apostle's ambition was as to his personal state, and that in relation to the Lord. Above everything he desired to be *personally* agreeable or well-pleasing to the Lord. This was not exactly his service, though it would give colour to it. It was not what he wished to be under the public eye but rather under the eye of Christ. Under the public eye the church in Ephesus appeared to be a witness for Christ and to show great energy in service; but under His eye they were a company of backsliders. The Lord had this against them—their love for Him was not what it used to be! Was this being agreeable to Him? It grieved Him sorely, and indicated a fall, from which there was no way of recovery save repentance.

How do *we* stand in regard to this very thing? It would seem that the Apostle is anxious to show us that our spiritual state

is far more important to the Lord than the amount of our service. It is all too easy to camouflage a low spiritual and moral state by greater activity in service, or by adopting what appear to be lofty ideals.

There is a decided side-light thrown on this point by that verse in Mark iii., which tells us how the Lord chose the twelve to be "with Him" before He sent them forth to preach. It is *with Him* that we get our spiritual state affected and toned up; and a thing that I have been made to feel for myself is that high pressure work in the service of the Lord is not necessarily the best thing for the soul.

Let us make it our ambition to be well-pleasing to God. Under the law there was not only the meat offering (Lev. ii.), but also the new meat offering (Lev. xxiii. 16, 17). The former typified what Christ was personally to God, a savour of delight—not His work but His life of perfect fragrance. The latter typified His people, presented in the power of the Holy Ghost. It is our privilege to form a part of that, and to reflect some of those moral excellencies that shone so brightly in Him. This, again I say, is not service, though it would colour and give character to it.

In the second Scripture Paul speaks of another ambition, for which he would like to see young converts in Thessalonica distinguished: this not exactly in relation to

themselves but their testimony towards them that are without. They were to abound in love one for the other, and pursue a quiet, godly, unobtrusive life in their daily business. This would stand out in sharp contrast to the men of the world who were seeking to over-reach each other rather than love each other, and to be constantly in the limelight, as people speak. Here he puts an honour upon those who glorify God amid the discipline of every-day business life.

Grace teaches us how to do this, as the Apostle tells us in Titus ii. To live "soberly," in ourselves, "righteously," in regard to others, "godly," piously in relation to God, will take the hum-drum monotony out of life, and cause us to be approved even of men (See, Rom. xiv. 18). Their Christianity was to be seen in its work-a-day clothes—not in *books* but in *boots*.

Others were showing a bad testimony in these things and, sad to say, were finding an occasion for it in the sweet hope of the Gospel—the coming of the Lord. They were not working at all and thus they became busy in Satan's employ, busybodies in other men's matters. To be doing nothing in the way of work is always bad for spirit, soul and body. He exhorts them to a steady, quiet, close walk with God, and to let it be *their ambition*.

When He exhorts them to be *quiet*, he does not mean them to be dumb or silent. It is quiet in contrast to ostentation, feverish bustle and excitement. You don't need to draw attention to yourself, and yet you can speak of the Lord while doing your own business, thus showing a light in the midst of darkness. "They that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word" (Acts viii. 4). They just went "gossiping" the Word; keep it to themselves, they could not. Don't let your business hide your light. Nor is it necessary to thrust it in people's faces. Just let it shine!

In the third Scripture Paul tells us of his ambition in connection with his service. He did not wish to merely hold evangelical views, but to be evangelistic *practically*. His ambition was not only to have evangelical sympathies but to be aggressively evangelistic in spreading the truth of the Gospel, where he would not be building on any other man's foundation.

You may say, I suppose you are now speaking in favour of missionary work. Yes, but missionary work has not the limit which we often put upon it. More correctly, we speak of it as evangelizing. Doubtless the Apostle had before him what we call missionary work among the unevangelized masses of heathen; and may God multiply a thousand-fold those who have the ambition to visit such places, where

there is no fear of building on any other man's work.

But let me plead and pray for another form of the same ambition, to be found in fields a little nearer home. The pioneering work is as much needed to-day in England as anywhere; for there are tens of thousands of baptized pagans to be found, as there are unbaptized pagans in the dark places of the earth. What are the congregations that enter the churches to-day listening to? Anything but the Gospel in the vast majority of cases.

It is argued that we cannot carry the Gospel now to any part of England in this way. There are so many Christian communities everywhere. Would it not be better to conduct an inter-community mission? It would be easier, no doubt, and spare you a good bit of the proper reproach of the Gospel. But you will thereby run the risk of building up organizations which, though nominally Christian, are rapidly becoming pagan; to say nothing of building up organizations which, though evangelical, are far short of the divine conception of the church of God as we have it in the Scriptures.

The Apostle Paul used to plant assemblies; that is, he preached the Gospel and taught the believers to gather together in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Then Apollos would sometimes come along and

water what he had sown, and God gave the increase.

Has this died out? And if not, could we say that we are conspicuous for it? Has it been one of the ambitions of our lives? *Of course* difficulties will present themselves but faith sees an opportunity in a difficulty, whereas indolence will seek an opportunity to escape the difficulty.

What I would plead for then, and what I am sure the Lord would approve of, is that the young servants of the Lord get it as the burden of their hearts to go forth with the Gospel. Let them carry it to towns and villages enshrouded in darkness, while in many cases boasting in their light and intelligence, but poisoned with the evil of modernism. Let them not wait so much for invitations here and there from other builders, who may indeed have more zeal and courage than themselves, and yet present them with none too good a foundation on which to build.

I would plead too for whole-hearted young men, who will turn their business journeys into opportunities for reaching the people with the Word. Halls, farm kitchens, cottages are available nearly everywhere.

How blessed we shall be if we make each ambition of the three our own!

ART. CUTTING.

## GREATER THAN ALL.

**W**HAT is the greatest event that has ever happened ?

Not creation with all its wonders of wisdom and power; not the entrance of sin into Eden with its sore entail of sorrow and death; not the judgments which fell on the old world, on Sodom, on Egypt; not even God's intervention on behalf of His people to deliver them out of the house of bondage and to make them a great nation; not Solomon's glorious kingdom, nor any of the mighty empires that have risen and fallen since then.

There is but one answer to the question. The point is which all the prophecies looked forward, the central fact of all history before and after, the one outstanding event in the whole universe is the death of the Lord Jesus Christ at Calvary.

No words could express the significance, for time and for eternity, of His death. Heaven and earth bore witness that it was no ordinary event. The sun was darkened, the earth did quake, and the rocks rent, and the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. It was the manifestation of the thoughts of God; it was the telling forth of love that was stronger than death; it was the culmination

of man's rejection and hatred. It revealed, as has been often said, the spiritual condition of all who were there. The dying thieves, the rough soldiers, the frightened disciples, the watching women, and the Roman centurion all alike stood exposed in their true characters, naked and open before God.

Then there came on the scene one whose name has not been mentioned before—Joseph of Arimathæa. The evangelists describe him in some detail—a rich man, an honourable counsellor who waited for the kingdom of God, a good man and a just, who had not consented to the decree of the Sanhedrim, a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews. This man comes forward; no longer a *secret* disciple, he went *boldly* to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. To him was committed the fulfilling of the prophecy that His grave should be with the rich, (Isa. liii. 9. N. Tr.) and Joseph and that other secret disciple, with reverent hands and with fragrant spices, conducted the most sacred funeral that ever had been or could be.

By their act they identified themselves with Him who had died this death of shame, "crucified through weakness" (2 Cor. xiii. 4.). Their act proclaimed aloud that they were followers of the Crucified, and it was well. It was done at the risk of their lives, and certainly with the loss of

their reputations. Never again could they take their place among the feared and powerful rulers of the Jews; all that was over. And yet we, who are so far behind them in zeal and courage, cannot but marvel that they had missed a very priceless privilege. They had not followed the Lord in His life here. In the days of His loneliness and rejection, others had borne Him company, not they. The words, "Ye are they which have continued with Me" (Luke xxii. 28) could not be spoken to them. What a loss had been theirs !

Does not this raise questions in our hearts beloved fellow Christians ?

His death has put away our sins; in His resurrection He has associated us with Himself in all His triumph, and has brought us as sons to His Father's house (in spirit now, soon to be there actually.) Before God we have been buried with Him by baptism unto death, we own our identification with Him in His death every time we break the bread and drink of the poured-out cup until He come; but we may well ask ourselves, is it a formal or habitual thing with us, or do we take it to heart that His death is the greatest event that has ever happened? Do we with adoration and worship look back into eternity, and forward to all the generations of the ages of the ages; back to before the time when the morning stars

sang together, and forward to the time when all things are made new, and consider that the death of the Lord Jesus Christ is the foundation of every blessing, ever to be enjoyed by men or angels, and will be the one eternal theme of praise?

Again, as we remember Him in His death we may well ask ourselves, are we content to be His disciples "but secretly for fear"—not of the Jews perhaps, but for fear of reproach or persecution? He is not loved in the world's ways any more than He was as He walked here, and those who are true to Him may find things made very difficult for them. On our lips perhaps is the well known hymn

"We sing the praise of Him who died,  
Of Him who died on the cross,  
The sinner's Hope—let men deride,  
For this we count the world but less."

But do we? Many saints who have gone on before, have testified that for them the world was well lost, so excellent was the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

If when our path is ended He should say to us, "Ye have continued with Me," would not all loss seem to have been so well worth while? Not indeed as having accompanied with Him on earth, but as having desired to follow, feebly and far behind perhaps, in the steps of those to whom this grace was given.

## THE POWER OF DEVOTEDNESS AND PRAYER.

**W**HAT different characters were these ! Both wonderful men of God, both raised to do a special work, Knox—a powerful personality, who did not know what fear was, the centre of storm and stress; McCheyne—gentle, earnest, consumed with passion for the souls of men.

John Knox's life centred round Edinburgh, and the time of Mary, Queen of Scotland. Robert Murray McCheyne was a minister at St. Peter's Church, Dundee in the early days of Queen Victoria.

An old Scotchman was talking to a friend. As he talked he leaned against the statue erected to the memory of Knox, opposite the United Free Church Assembly Hall entrance in Edinburgh. He told the story how Robert Murray McCheyne would lean over his pulpit in the deep emotion of the moment and cry, "I cannot go on," his voice broken and faltering. Then he would weep like a child, finally lifting his eyes, and crying to God with intense emotion, "O God, take this people Thyself, and tell them what I cannot tell them, and fill them with Thyself."

The Scotchman, as he leaned against John Knox's monument, said, "Do you know,

friend, this man, Knox, did great things for Scotland, but young McCheyne's prayer touched a chord in Scotland and in Scottish hearts, that even this great man never touched with all his power. To think that when he was only thirty God called him away, but he brought down the power of God upon Scotland and it is with us still."

*Devotedness* was the distinguishing feature of McCheyne's life, coupled with earnest importunate prayer. Would that we could catch a bit of his spirit! Better still the spirit of his Master! How blessed that would be!

A. J. POLLOCK.

## OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

(*Romans vi. 4-23*).

Owing to the length of this epistle we have made our remarks briefer and more condensed than usual. It will therefore be more than ever necessary to refer to the Scripture itself as you read this article.

**L**ET us notice the closing words of verse 4, "newness of life," for they give a concise answer to the question with which the chapter opened. Instead of continuing in sin, which is in effect continuing to live the old life, we are to walk in a life which is new. As we go through the chapter we discover what the character of that new life is.

Our baptism was our burial with Christ—in figure. It was “the likeness of His death,” and in it we were identified with Him; for that is what the rather obscure expression, “planted together” means. We submitted to it in the confidence that we are to be identified with Him in His risen life. The newness of life in which we are to walk is in fact connected with the life of resurrection in which Christ is to-day.

In verse 3 we were to know the meaning of our baptism; now in verse 6 we are called upon to know the meaning of the cross in relation to “our old man,” and “the body of sin.” The cross is that which lies behind baptism, and without which baptism would lose its meaning.

We have already had before us the death of Christ in its bearing upon our sins and their forgiveness. Here we have its bearing upon our sinful nature, whence have sprung all the sins that ever we committed.

It is not perhaps easy to seize the thought conveyed by “our old man.” We may explain it by saying that the Apostle is here personifying all that we are as the natural children of Adam. If you could imagine a person whose character embraced all the ugly features that have ever been displayed in all the members of Adam’s race, that person might be described as, “our old man.”

All that we were as children of fallen Adam has been crucified with Christ, and we are to know this. It is not a mere notion but an actual fact. It was an act of God, accomplished in the cross of Christ: as much an act of God, and as real, as the putting away of our sins, accomplished at the same time. We are to know it by faith, just as we know that our sins are forgiven. When we do know it by faith certain other results follow. But we begin by knowing it in simple faith.

What God had in view in the crucifixion of our old man was that "the body of sin" might be "destroyed," or rather, "annulled," so that henceforth we might not serve sin. This again is a statement not easy to understand. We must recall that sin formerly dominated us in our bodies, which in consequence were in a very terrible sense bodies of sin. Now it is not that our literal bodies have been annulled, but that sin, which in its fulness dominated our bodies, has been, and thus we are freed from its power. It has been annulled by the crucifixion of our old man, the result of our identification with Christ in His death, so that His death was ours also.

Take note of the closing words of verse 6. They give us quite clearly the light in which sin is viewed in this chapter. Sin is a master, a slave-owner, and we had fallen under its power. The point dis-

cussed in the chapter is not the presence of sin *in us* but the power of sin *over us*. We have got our discharge from sin. We are justified from it, as verse 7 states.

Our discharge has been effected by the death of Christ. But it is very important to maintain the connection between His death and His resurrection. We saw this when considering the last verse of chapter iv., and we see it again here. Our *death* with Christ is in view of our *living* with Him in the life of the resurrection world.

We get the word *know* for the third time in verse 9. We should know the meaning of baptism. We should know the bearing of the death of Christ as relating to our old man. Thirdly we should know the bearing of the resurrection of Christ. His resurrection was not a mere resuscitation. It was not like the raising of Lazarus—a coming back to life in this world for a certain number of years, after which death again supervenes. When He arose He left death behind Him for ever, entering another order of things, which for convenience sake we call the resurrection world. For a brief moment death had dominion over Him, and that only by His own act in subjecting Himself to it. Now He is beyond it for ever.

His death was a death unto sin once and for ever. It is sin here, you notice, and not sins; the root principle which had

permeated our nature and assumed the mastery of us, and not the actual offences which were its product. Moreover, it is not death *for* sins but *unto* sin. Sin never had to say to Him in His nature as it had with us. But He had to say to it, when in His sacrifice He took up the whole question of sin as it affected the glory of God in His ruined creation, and as it affected us, standing as a mighty barrier against our blessing. Having had to say to it, bearing its judgment, He has died to it, and now He lives to God.

Let us pause and test ourselves as to these things. Do we really know this? Do we really understand the death and resurrection of Christ in this light? Do we realize how completely our Lord has died out of that old order of things dominated by sin, into which once He came in grace to accomplish redemption; and how fully He lives to God in that new world into which He has entered? It is important that we should realize all this, because verse 11 proceeds to instruct us that we should *reckon* according to what we *know*.

If we do not know rightly, we cannot reckon correctly. No tradesman will rightly reckon up his books if he does not know the multiplication tables. No skipper can rightly reckon the position of his vessel if he does not know the principles of navigation. Just so no believer is going to

rightly reckon out his position and attitude either in regard to sin or to God, if he does not know the bearing of the death and resurrection of Christ upon his case.

When once we *do* know, the reckoning enjoined in verse 11 becomes perfectly plain to us. Our case is governed by Christ's, for we are identified with Him. Did He die to sin? Then we are dead to sin, and so we reckon it. Does He now live to God? Then we now live to God, and so we reckon it. Our reckoning is not mere make-believe. It is not that we try to reckon ourselves to be what in point of fact we are not. The very reverse. We are dead to sin and alive to God by His own acts, accomplished in the death and resurrection of Christ (to be made effectual in us by His Spirit, as we shall see later on) and that being so, we are to accept it and adjust our thoughts to it. As things *are*, so we are to reckon.

Before we were converted we were dead to God and alive to sin. We had no interest in anything that had to do with God. We did not understand His things; they left us cold and dead. When however it was a question of anything that appealed to our natural desires, of anything that fed our vanity and self-love, then we were all alive with interest. Now by the grace of God the situation is exactly reversed as the fruit of our being in Christ Jesus.

Having adjusted our reckoning, in accordance with the facts concerning the death and resurrection of Christ which we know, there yet remains a further step. We are to *yield* ourselves to God in order that His will may be practically worked out in detail in our lives. The word *yield*, occurs, you will notice, five times in the latter part of the chapter.

Being dead to sin it is quite obvious that the obligation rests upon us to refuse sin any rights over us. Formerly it did reign in our mortal bodies and we were continually obeying it in its various lusts. This is to be so no longer, as verse 12 tells us. We have died to sin, the old master, and its claim upon us has ceased. Being alive from the dead, we belong to God, and we gladly acknowledge His claims over us. We yield ourselves to Him.

This yielding is a very practical thing, as verse 13 makes plain. It affects all the members of our bodies. Formerly every member was in some way enlisted in the service of sin and so became an instrument of unrighteousness. Is it not a wonderful thing that every member may now be enlisted in the service of God? Our feet may run His errands. Our hands may do His work. Our tongues may speak forth His praise. In order that this may be so we are to yield ourselves unto God.

The word, yield, occurs twice in this verse, but the verb is in two different tenses. A Greek scholar has commented upon them to this effect:—that in the first case the verb is in the present in its continuous sense. “Neither yield your members.” It is at no time to be done. In the second case the tense is different. “Yield yourselves to God.” Let it have been done, as a once accomplished act.

Let us each solemnly ask ourselves if indeed we have done it as a once accomplished act. Have we thus definitely yielded ourselves and our members to God, for His will? If so, let us see to it that at no time do we forget our allegiance and fall into the snare of yielding our members even for a moment to unrighteousness, for the outcome of that is sin.

Sin, then, is not to have dominion over us, for the very reason that we are not under the law but under grace. Here is the divine answer to those who tell us that if we tell people that they are no longer under the regime of law, they are sure to plunge into sin. The fact is that nothing so subdues the heart and promotes holiness as the grace of God.

Verse 15 bears witness to the fact that there have always been people who think that the only way to promote holiness is to keep us under the tight bondage of law.

There were such in Paul's day. He anticipates their objection by repeating in substance the question with which he opened the chapter. In reply to it he restates the position in a more extended way. Verses 16 to 23 are an extension and amplification of what he had just stated in verses 12 to 14.

He appeals to that practical knowledge which is common to us all. We all know that if we yield obedience to anyone, though not nominally their servant we *are* their servant practically. That is the case also in spiritual things, whether it be serving sin or God. Judged by this standard, we were without a question once the slaves of sin. But when the Gospel "form of doctrine" reached us we obeyed it, thanks be to God! As a result we have been emancipated from the thralldom of sin, and have become servants of God and righteousness. Well then, being now servants of righteousness, we are to yield our members in detail so that God may have His way with us.

This yielding then is a tremendously important business. It is that to which our knowledge and our reckoning lead up. If we stop short of it our knowledge and our reckoning become of no effect. Here doubtless we have the reason of so much that is feeble and ineffectual with Christians who are well instructed in the theory of the thing. They stop short at yielding themselves and their members to God. Oh, let

us see to it that if as yet we have never had it done, as a once accomplished act, we have it done at once! Having it done we shall need and find grace for the continuous yielding of our members in the service of God.

All this supposes that the old master, sin, is still within us, only waiting for opportunities to assert itself. This makes the triumph of grace all the greater. It also increases to us the value of the lessons we learn. We learn how to yield our members servants to righteousness unto holiness, even while sin is lurking within, eager to reassert itself. In serving righteousness we serve God, for to do the will of God is the first element of righteousness. And righteousness in all our dealings leads to holiness of life and character.

Instead, then, of continuing in sin, as those enslaved by its power, we are set free from it by being brought under the sway of God. Twice do we get the words, "made free from sin" (verses 18 and 22). Formerly we were "free from righteousness." We have escaped the old power and come under the new. This is the way of holiness and life.

Everlasting life is here viewed as the end of the wonderful story. In the writings of the Apostle John we find it presented as a present possession of the believer. There

is no conflict between these two views of it. That which is ours now in its essence, will be ours in its full expanse when eternity is reached.

The last verse of our chapter, so well known, gives us a concise summary of the matter. We cannot serve sin without receiving its wages, which is death. Death is a word of large meaning. In one sense death came in upon man when by sin he was utterly separated from God. The death of the body occurs when it is separated from the spiritual part of man. The second death is when lost men are finally separated from God. The full wages of sin includes death in all three senses.

In connection with God no wages are spoken of. All is gift. The very life in which we can serve Him is His own gift through Jesus Christ our Lord. Thus at the end of the chapter we come back to the thought with which the previous chapter closed. We may well make our boast in the eternal life which is ours by God's free gift, and heartily embrace all the consequences to which it leads.

F. B. HOLE.

We are saved by grace and not by keeping the moral law. But grace in Christ never lowers the high demands of the moral law in deference to the weakness of human nature. It lifts them rather to higher levels.

## CHRIST AS SEEN IN THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

THE Epistle to the Philippians differs from most of the epistles from the pen of the Apostle Paul, in that he does not describe himself as an *apostle* of Jesus Christ, but introduces himself and Timotheus as *servants* of Jesus Christ. What he writes is not so much the unfolding of doctrine as the describing the effect that the knowledge of Christ should have upon the believer, illustrated very much by his own experience.

It has often been said that in this epistle we get

### CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE.

though it is by no means the experience of every Christian. The reader may ask, Wherein lies the difference? Christian experience stands for experience flowing from the Christian life; in other words, that which is *proper* to a Christian. The experience of many a Christian may be, all too often, experience *improper* to a Christian.

For instance, if a believer rejoices in the Lord, that is Christian experience—ex-

perience proper to a Christian. But if a believer loses his temper or in any other way falls under the power of sin, that is an experience of a sort very *improper* to a Christian.

Surely we all covet Christian experience. Let us see how this works out in the epistle. We might put it under four heads:—

Chapter I—Christ our *Life*.

Chapter II—Christ our *Example*.

Chapter III—Christ our *Object*.

Chapter IV—Christ our *Strength*.

### CHRIST OUR LIFE.

The Apostle Paul could say, "*For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*" (Philippians i. 21.) Ever since that memorable day when the blind zealot, who thought he was doing God's service by persecuting the church of God, was stricken down by the light above the brightness of the sun, and made the acquaintance of the Son of God, his whole life was altered. Not content with the gain of the gospel, with the knowledge of salvation, he surrendered himself, body and soul, to his newly found Lord, and served him diligently all his days, even at the expense of all a man naturally holds dear, and even of life itself.

Not to boast of himself, but as inspired of God, and for our example, he could testify "*For to me to live is Christ,*" not thinking

of what he had done, but testifying rather to the absorbing influence of the Son of God that left him no option but to lay his all upon the altar of self-denying sacrifice as his truest and most everlasting gain.

Not all of us could say this. Can any of us say it? We may say it in measure, but the example is there for us. This is true Christian experience.

We can all say, "*And to die is gain*"—we can say that because the death of Christ has won heaven for us, but can we say, "*And to die is gain,*" if it means leaving that for which we have lived more or less self-centred lives? If we have lived for money, or fame, or social distinction, or domestic happiness, or even a place in the assembly, and not for Christ these things will all be loss in the day of reckoning.

May we all be stirred and challenged by the apostle's statement, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

### CHRIST OUR EXAMPLE.

The Apostle could exhort, "*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.*" (Philippians ii. 5). The apostle Paul may be our example in many ways, but when he gives us a definite example to follow, he gives us the only perfect One, the Lord Himself. He would fix our eye on Perfection

alone. What an Example—One, who was God, One who did not need to aspire to Godhead, as Satan dared to do and fell—One, who could be no higher for He was and is and ever will be God the Son ! This One, “the mighty God,” stooped in lowly grace to the form of a bonds slave, and then stooped still lower, till He touched the lowest place and became “obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” Was there ever such a stoop ? What an amazing example ! Can we, Christians, strut about in our littleness and boast of anything ? Shall not the mind that dominated the Son of God dominate us ? Shall pride of face, race, place, or even fancied grace have a power over us with such an Example compelling us to adoring worship ? To ask the question is to answer it.

### CHRIST OUR OBJECT.

The apostle could say, “*I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.*” (Philippians iii. 8.)

Again the Apostle gives us His personal experience, or rather describes the attractive power of Christ, which drew him on in the heavenly race. The tides cannot boast of their flow and ebb, it is the irresistible draw of the moon that brings it about, so the apostle is drawn by an Object so glorious and attractive that he is urged along towards

the goal. He could not help himself. He speaks of the loss of all things, but it was a loss that led to a marvellous gain. The things he surrendered, which men would count gain, he counted loss, nay, he went even further, and counted it as dung, refuse, that he might win Christ.

The aged apostle, a prisoner in Rome, with decaying bodily powers, with the stigmata of his sufferings for Christ scarred upon his worn body, was strong in spiritual force. Nearing the goal of his ardent desires, behold him, as with long powerful spiritual strides he eagerly presses forward. What else was worth living for? And what else is worth living for, in your case and mine? Look at things in the light of the immense gain the apostle's surrender to Christ brought him, and go in for what is truly life.

### CHRIST OUR STRENGTH.

The apostle could say, "*I can do all things through Christ which strengthened me.*" (Philippians iv. 13). Christ was the apostle's strength. Were he full, with no need, he could praise the Lord. Were he hungry and suffering the pinch of the very necessities of life, no complaint passed his lips, no reflection on God's care for him passed through his mind. The testimony of this must have been very impressive. Christ was the Source of his quietness and com-

placency. It was as if he lived on an island, and needed not to import anything from the mainland in the way of moral support. Christ was enough at all times.

“Jesus, Thou art enough  
The mind and heart to fill,  
Thy patient life to calm the soul,  
Thy love its fear dispel.”

May each reader realize the blessedness of having

*Christ as his Life.*

*Christ as his Example.*

*Christ as his Object.*

*Christ as his Strength.*

How happy then will you be, if this is the case.

A. J. POLLOCK.

## ARE YOU REALLY FREE ?

**T**HERE are many, thank God, who truly rejoice in being righteously made free from the burden of their sins: in being justified freely by God's grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. They know that His atoning work is so perfect, that God can say concerning those who believe on Him, "Their sins and their iniquities I will remember no more." They are free, and they rightly rejoice in faith.

But our enquiry is, Are you yourself perfectly *free in God's things*? not simply *free from your sins*.

Many who can say, "I know my sins have been put away by my Saviour for ever," can go further and say, "I know also that the *root*, from which my sins came, has been sacrificially removed too: root and branch—all has been righteously dealt with." God, having sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, has condemned sin in the flesh—in His sacrifice for it upon the cross. It has been absolutely condemned and unsparingly judged. Both sins and sin have been put away in Christ's sacrifice. Now He is risen from the grave without them; and a new principle of life is ours in Him; so we read, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death" (N. Tr.)—yes, "*set me free!*"

We have good reason to thank and praise God that we are freed from both sins and sin, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Speaking of bondage to sin, He pointed the way of freedom from it; "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free" (John viii. 32); but in verse 36 we are told of further freedom—not only *from*, but *into*. So we read, "If therefore THE SON shall set you free, ye shall be really free."

Why? Because of the greatness and glory and intimacy with God of the One

who grants this holy freedom along with Himself in God's things. He instructively said, "The servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever." This holy nearness and intimacy eternally belong to the Son—mark, "THE SON"—therefore He can give this real freedom personally, which none else can: "THE SON ABIDETH EVER." In John's gospel we read of the Son in the Father's bosom (i. 18); and of a loved disciple in the bosom of Jesus (xiii. 23); who said to His own, concerning this day, "Ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you;" because He is risen and ascended to the Father; and the Comforter, the Spirit of truth has come.

So great and glorious is our Saviour and Lord, we are told of Him in Colossians, "All things were made" by Him, the Son of the Father's love; also that the pre-eminence in creation is His; because He, the Son, made all things (15-16). Glory to His holy Name! Such an One is able to give real freedom *in* God's eternal things, even as He has righteously freed us *from* sins and sin by His sacrifice. How infinitely blessed and true are His own words, "*If, therefore, THE SON shall set you free, ye shall be REALLY FREE.*" He is "*before all*" we read; and abiding ever in eternal things and eternal relationship as THE ETERNAL SON, He can set us free before THE FATHER in regard to eternal things, in the grace

and power of Him who is called "THE ETERNAL SPIRIT"—*really free!*

Ephesians ii. explains doctrinally how we are now become nigh, though once far off. In Him, whose blood was shed, this nearness is ours. Liberty of access to the Father, through Him, by the Spirit, is divinely granted to us. Mephibosheth, who was once afar off in Lodebar, was set down at the royal table in the king's palace, to eat bread at the king's table, as one of the king's sons. He said to David, "What is thy servant that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am?" But the royal father showed "the kindness of God unto him." That kindness has given us holy happy freedom in His presence, and we now address Him "*Abba, Father.*" Once dead in offences and sins, without God in the world, afar off, we are now brought *inside* by THE SON, who came where we were to bring us in faith where He is—to "the Father's house of plenty"—*really free* there; and eventually to be with Him in His Father's house above. In the parable we read, "Let us make merry," when the son was received home safe and sound. "And they began to be merry" we are told (Luke xv.). They "*began*"; and there is no word of an "*ending.*"

In 1 John 2 we find *the Son* named before *the Father*; for, being the Son, He

brings us eternal life, being Himself spoken of as "the eternal life." So it is said to us, "Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son and in the Father. And this is the promise which He has promised us, even eternal life" (24).

The true believer on the Son has eternal life. The Son, as we have said, because of who He is, can bring us into what is eternal; and no one else can do so. John iii. 36 reads, "He that believeth on the Son has life eternal" (N. Tr.). Being eternal Himself, the character of the life which is ours in and through Him is eternal also. All glory to Him that this is so. His be the praise for ever and ever.

God the Father has so ordered that "*all should honour THE SON, even as they honour THE FATHER*" (John v. 23). In the freedom He grants, we shall never seek to detract from His glory; but find our joy in honouring the Son, even as we delight to honour the Father, through the eternal Spirit's grace and teaching. Made "*really free*" in the things of God, we shall rejoice in that Word, "*He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son*" (2 John 9).

## HINTS ON OPEN-AIR PREACHING.

**T**HERE is a numerous class in the church of God whose gifts are not marked, who yet can sometimes speak half an hour or less at the street corner to edification and profit. These may not be called to leave their earthly callings, but preach as opportunity offers or occasion requires.

It is to this class that we address ourselves. And we have the young or new beginners primarily in view. How fine it is to see Christian young men stand up to tell that wonderful story of redemption that angels might covet to proclaim! To such we would offer, in the spirit of meekness, a few practical suggestions.

### I.

**BE SOBER.** A spirit of lightness ill becomes those who stand forth to speak on solemn themes—death, judgment, heaven, hell, eternity! How unseemly to hear them jokingly ask each other, Have you got your sword? Have you got your sermon ready? and like flippant expressions, with which some of us are not altogether unfamiliar. And in preaching, our language, whatever else it lack, should be always solemn, though not sanctimonious, cheerful but not light. A brother told us of a stranger he once

heard preaching on the street. He was a young man, and was preaching the gospel fairly well, and our friend was arrested. But when the too smart preacher said, "I have heard sinners say they were seeking the Saviour, but I never knew the Saviour was lost," he turned away deeply grieved. Alas these are the "dead flies" which cause the otherwise sweet-scented "ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour." Such attempts at cheap wit may catch the ear of an undesirable few, but the men most likely to be benefitted by our preaching are those to whom such expressions from the lips of one who stands forth as an ambassador for Christ are repugnant. *Be sober!*

## II.

.BE BRIEF. This advice is not necessary, perhaps, to those just beginning to speak in public. Such are so timid and words with them so hard to find, that the exhortation, "Let thy words be few," would be lost upon them. It is the somewhat practised speaker, who has perhaps a natural fluency of language (which is never an evidence of real gift), who needs to remember that long sermons, like "long prayers," are not always the most effectual. Ten or fifteen minutes is about as long as most men can hold the attention of an audience in the open air. And in a hall or room there are not many who can continue more than thirty

minutes to edification. How often we have noticed a brother's discourse to be edifying up to a certain point (when it was evident that he ought to have stopped), but he *would* go on, and so undid much of his good, and wearied his audience up to the straining point. As a rule, brief discourses edify most. Gifted men are generally brief. No rule, however, can be laid down as to length of time. Most unconverted people (and to these we preach the gospel) would prefer to have a speaker, however gifted, stop under forty-five minutes than to exceed that limit. "Five words" to edification are better than "ten thousand words" of a man who imagines he shall be heeded for his much speaking. We remember a brother who used to continue to preach in the open air until he saw the back of his last auditor. When remonstrated with by his brethren, he replied: "Oh, it seems a pity to stop *while there is anybody listening!*" Whose failing follow not. *Be brief!*

### III.

BE POINTED. Do not attempt to cover too much ground. We have listened to preachers who ranged through the fields of Scripture "from Dan to Beersheba," and "from the river to the ends of the earth." They rambled in an aimless fashion through almost every book in the Bible, and one might think they were labouring to give an epitome of all that the Scriptures contained,

historical, doctrinal, prophetic, and preceptive. They appeared to wish to give their patient listeners a complete body of divinity—creation, redemption, sanctification, justification, regeneration, and all. They quoted freely from patriarchs, apostles, and prophets. Their knowledge of Scripture seemed amazing; and it was—it put all in a *maze* who attempted to follow them in their Biblical intricacies and theological subtleties. It was like a soldier on a modern battle-field attempting to kill off the enemy with a large-bore, flare-muzzled, short-barrelled shot-gun. It may make a deafening, reverberating roar, but it is the short, sharp crack of the carefully aimed rifle that does the work and wins the day. Let us speak to the point, and press home upon the consciences of sinners a few plain facts of the gospel, and not bewilder them with a mass of Biblical information. *Be pointed!*

#### IV.

BE WISE—"wise as serpents." Avoid as much as possible stands in the open air where the preaching will be likely to create disturbance. Do not continue singing after a crowd has gathered, but get to preaching at once. Singing is but the bell-ringing to gather your congregation. Let the helpers stand *before you*. This forms a little nucleus for a crowd, and the larger the crowd of listeners appears to be the more likely are passers-by to stop. Do not, in

preaching, shout at the top of your voice, or pitch it four or five times higher than usual. It is penetration and distinctness that is required rather than volume. The more natural one can be the better; and do not fear to be a little colloquial as you go along. Use illustrations frequently and fittingly. It helps to hold attention, throws light on your subject, or clinches what you are saying. As soon as you notice the crowd getting restless and beginning to move on, stop at once. Have your "lastly" ever at your tongue's end, ready for instant use. Sing a rousing hymn rousingly, and when the crowd is again somewhat settled let another speaker begin. If the wind is blowing, stand with your back to it in speaking. Always if possible, face a wall while speaking. It will save your lungs wonderfully. Do not distribute tracts until the meeting is over, or the tracts will distract. If they will do it, it is better to have the people come to you for the tracts. They will appreciate them more than if thrust upon them. *Be wise!*

## V.

BE GENTLE—"harmless as doves." Avoid harshness of tone and asperity of manner. Your language may be forced without being fiery, you may warn without anathematizing, and be faithful without being fierce. In speaking of future punishment (as you surely must), do it with tenderness; and be sure

you feel in your soul the force of what you say. The successful surgeon must needs probe deep at times and with the sharpest of instruments, but how gently he goes about it. How tenderly he touches the wounded spot, even as with velvet fingers, and where the knife cuts into the place that is most painful his voice is softest. Avoid the word "hell" as much as possible. Other words will answer equally as well or better, and will not be so likely to grate upon the ear. "Everlasting punishment," "The lake of fire," "The blackness of darkness for ever," etc., are expressions more startling and quite as scriptural. Persuade men urgently, constantly, fearlessly, as you know the "terror of the Lord," but be sure it is "the love of Christ" constraining you. A college boy told us that he was once moved almost to the point of yielding himself to the Lord by the tears he saw in the eyes of a loving young Christian who was urging him to come to Christ. A single tear will sometimes move a soul when sermons are lost upon it. *Be gentle!*

## VI.

BE PATIENT—patient with your fellow-workers, patient with your critics, and patient with the cold, callous world to which you preach. They may malign and persecute you, but preach on; do not allow yourself to become soured, as some, alas have done and now sleep, prophet-like, beneath the juni-

per tree of depression, in whose branches their silver trumpet of redemption hangs unused. Courage, brethren! your work is glorious and your reward is sure. "But ye have need of patience." "In due season ye shall reap if ye faint not." *Be patient!*

C.K.

## OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

(*Romans vii.* 1-23).

Owing to the length of this epistle we have made our remarks briefer and more condensed than usual. It will therefore be more than ever necessary to refer to the Scripture itself as you read this article.

**T**HE opening words of chapter vii. direct our minds back to the 14th and 15th verses of the previous chapter, where the apostle had plainly stated that the believer is not under law but under grace. A tremendous controversy had raged around this point, to which the Acts bears witness—especially chapter xv.

That point was authoritatively settled at Jerusalem as regards the Gentile believers. They were not to be put under the law. But was the point as clear when Jewish believers were in question?

It was evidently by no means clear to the Jewish believers themselves. Acts xxi. 20, proves this. It was very necessary therefore that Paul should make the matter abundantly plain and definite; hence his recurring

to the theme as he opens this chapter. The words enclosed in brackets in verse 1 show that he is now specially addressing himself to his Jewish brethren. They alone *knew* the law, in the proper sense of the term. Gentiles might know something about it as observers from without: Israel knew it from within, as having been put under it. This remark of Paul's furnishes us with an important key to the chapter, indicating the point from which things are viewed.

The first six verses of this chapter are doctrinal in nature, showing the way by which the believer is delivered from the bondage of law and brought into connection with Christ. From verse 7 onwards, we have a passage which is highly experimental. The actions of the law, on the heart and conscience of one who fears God, are detailed. We are given an insight into the experimental workings of law which ultimately prepare the believer for the experience of the deliverance found in Christ and in the Spirit of God. It is a remarkable fact that in all chapter vii. there is not one mention of the Holy Spirit; whereas in chapter viii. there is probably more mention of Him than in any other chapter of the Bible.

The Apostle's starting point is the well known fact that law extends its sway over a man as long as he lives. Death, and death only, terminates its dominion. This is seen

very clearly in connection with the divine law of marriage, as stated in verses 2 and 3.

The same principle applies in spiritual things, as verse 4 states, though it does not apply in exactly the same way. The law is in the position of husband and we who believe are in the position of wife. Yet it is not that death has come in upon the law, but that *we have died*. Verse 4 is quite plain as to this. Verse 6 appears to say that the law has died, only here the correct reading is found in the margin of reference Bibles. It is not, "that being dead . . .," but rather, "being dead to that . . ." The two verses quite agree.

We have become dead to the law "by the body of Christ." This at first sight seems somewhat obscure. Paul refers, we believe, to that which was involved in our Lord taking the body prepared for Him, and thereby becoming a Man. He took that body with a view to *suffering death*, and hence the body of Christ is used as signifying His death. It is the same figure of speech as we have in Colossians i. 22., where we are said to be reconciled "in the body of His flesh, *through death*."

We have died from under law's dominion in the death of Christ. In this way our connection with the first husband has ceased. But all is in view of our entering into a new connection under the risen Christ. Every

Jew found the old husband—the law—very stern and unbending, a wife-beater in fact; though they had to admit they richly deserved all they got. We, Gentiles, can hardly imagine how great the relief when the converted Jew discovered that he was now under Christ and not under law. “Married” to Christ, risen from the dead, the standard set was higher than it ever was under law, but now an unbounded supply flowed from Him of the grace and power needed, and hence fruit for God became a possibility. As Husband, Christ is the Fountain-head of all support, guidance, comfort and power.

How striking the contrast which verse 5 presents! Indeed the verse itself is very striking for it names four things that go together:—flesh, law, sins, death. Of old the law was imposed upon a people “in the flesh.” In result it simply stirred into action the sin which ever lies latent in the flesh. Consequently the “motions” or “passions” of sins were aroused and death followed as God’s judgment upon all. “Flesh” here is not our bodies, but the fallen nature which has its seat in our present bodies. Every unconverted person is “in the flesh;” that is, the flesh dominates them and characterizes their state. But you notice that for believers that state has passed away. The Apostle says “*when we were in the flesh.*”

Another contrast confronts us when we turn to verse 6. “*when we were . . . But*

*now.*" Having died with Christ, we are not only dead to sin, as chapter vi. enforces, but dead also to the law and therefore delivered from it. Consequently we can now serve God in an entirely new way. We not only do new things, but we do those new things in a new spirit. In the previous chapter we read of "newness of life." (verse 4.) Now we read of "newness of spirit."

We read of people in Old Testament days who turned from lives of recklessness and sin to the fear of God—Manasseh, King of Judah, for instance, as recorded in 2 Chronicles xxxiii. 11-19. It might perhaps be said of him that he walked in newness of life during the last years of his reign. Yet he could only serve God according to the principles and ways of the law-system under which he was. It was impossible for newness of *spirit* to mark him. If we want to see service in newness of spirit we must turn to a converted Jew of this present period of grace. He may once have done his best to serve God in the spirit of strict law-keeping. Now he discovers himself to be a son and heir of God in Christ Jesus, and he serves in the spirit of a son with a father—a spirit which is altogether new.

An employer may set two men to a certain task, one of them being his own son. If the young man in any degree realizes the relationship in which he stands he will set about the work in a spirit altogether different

to that of a hired servant. Our illustration would perhaps have been even nearer the mark had we supposed the case of a wife serving her husband's interests. Delivered from the law by death, the death of Christ, we are linked with the risen Christ in order to fruitfully serve God in a spirit that is new.

Teaching such as this most evidently brings Christ into prominence and puts the law into the shade. Does it in any way cast an aspersion on the law? Does it even infer that there was something wrong with *it*? This point is taken up in verses 7 to 13, and it is made abundantly clear that the law was perfect as far as it went. The mischief was not with the law but with the sin which rose up against the law, finding in the law indeed that which provoked it, and also that which condemned it.

Verse 7 tells us how the law exposed and condemned sin. Before the law came we sinned but did not realize what sinners we were. Directly the law spoke we discovered the true state of the case. Just as a plumbline reveals the crookedness of a tottering wall, so the law exposed us.

Yet it was sin and not law that wrought the mischief, as verse 8 states; though sin somewhat camouflaged itself by springing into activity directly it was confronted with the definite prohibition of the law. The

very fact that we were told not to do a thing provoked us to do it!

As a matter of fact then the law affected us in two ways. First, it stirred up sin into action. It drew a line and forbade us to step over it. Sin promptly stirred us up to transgress by stepping over it. Second, in the presence of this transgression the law solemnly pronounced the death sentence upon us. True, the law set *life* before us; saying, "This do, and thou shalt live." Yet in point of fact all it ever did in regard to us was to condemn us to *death*, as failing utterly to do what it commanded. These two results of the law are tersely stated at the end of verse 9:—"Sin revived, and I died."

This being the state of the case, no blame of any kind attaches itself to the law, which is "holy, and just, and good." Sin, not the law, is the culprit. Sin worked death, though it was by the law that the sentence of death was pronounced. Sin indeed was working before ever the law was given, but directly it was given sin had no excuse and its defiance became outrageous. Sin by the commandment coming became *exceeding sinful*, as verse 13 tells us.

We have now got to a part of the chapter where the Apostle speaks in the first person singular. In verses 5 and 6 it was "we . . . we . . . we . . ." after the question with

which verse 7 opens it is all "I . . . I . . . me . . . I . . ." This is because he now speaks *experimentally*, and when experience is in question each must speak for himself.

The opening words of verse 14 may seem to be an exception to what we have just said but they are not. It is a *fact* that the law is spiritual, and not a mere matter of experience—and it is stated as a fact which we know. In contrast with it stands what "I am," and this has to be learned as a matter of sad experience, "carnal, sold under sin."

How do we learn what we are? Why, by making a genuine effort to conform to the spiritual demand which the law makes. The more earnest we are about it the more effectively is the lesson burned into our souls. We learn our sinfulness in trying to be good!

Let us recall what we learned in chapter vi. for there we were shown the way. Realizing by faith that we are identified with Christ in His death we understand that we are to reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive to God, and consequently we are to yield ourselves and our members to God for His will and pleasure. Our souls fully assent to this as right and proper, and we say to ourselves, with considerable enthusiasm perhaps, "Exactly! that is what I am going to do."

We essay to do it, and lo! we receive a very disagreeable shock. Our intentions are of the best but we somehow are without power to put these things into practice. We see the good and approve it in our minds, yet we fail to do it. We recognize the evil of which we disapprove, and yet we are ensnared by it. A very distressing and humiliating state of affairs, which we find stated in verse 19.

In verses 14 to 23 we get "I" no less than 24 times. "Me" and "my" occur 10 times. The speaker evidently describes an experience, during which he was simply swamped in self-occupation. All his thoughts were turned in upon himself. This is not surprising for this is exactly the normal effect of the law upon an awakened and conscientious soul. As we examine those verses, we can see that the exercises recorded resulted in valuable discoveries.

1. He discovered by experience the good and holy character of the law. It is good as verse 9 states; but he now has to say "*I consent* unto the law that *it is good.*" v. 16

2. He discovered by experience his own fallen state: not only "carnal" but "sold under sin." Anyone who has to confess that he is so overpowered to be compelled to avoid what he wishes and practice what he hates, and so be in the humiliating position of continually disowning his own actions

(verse 15) is indeed *enslaved*. We are like slaves sold in the market to a tyrannical master:—*sold under sin*.

3. Yet he learns to distinguish between what has been wrought in him by God—what we call “the new nature”—and the flesh which is the old nature. Verse 17 shews this. He recognizes that there is his true “I” connected with the new nature, and an “I” or a “me” which he has to repudiate, as being the old nature.

4. He learns by experience the true character of that old nature. If it be a question of “me,” that is, “the flesh” (here you see, it is the old “me” that he has to repudiate) in that no good is found, as verse 18 tells us. *Good* simply is *not there*. So it is useless searching for it. Have some of us spent weary months, or even years, looking for good in a place where it is non-existent ?

5. He learns further that though he is now possessed of a new nature, an “inward man” (verse 22) yet that *in itself* bestows no strength upon him. The inward man may delight in God’s holy law ; his mind may consent to the law that it is good, but all the same there is a more powerful force working in his members that enslaves him.

What a heart breaking state of affairs ! Some of us have known it bitterly enough.

Others of us have a taste of it now. And if any as yet have not known it they may well be alarmed, for it at once raises a question as to *whether they are as yet possessed of a new nature*. If there is nothing but the old nature, struggles and exercises such as these must in the nature of things be unknown.

Such exercises are of great value as preparing the soul for the gladness of *a divinely wrought deliverance*.

F. B. HOLE.

## ANSWER TO A CORRESPONDENT.

I have read with interest your article on Romans vi. As to the motions of sin within, many would be comforted if it were pointed out that if they be not tolerated and indulged, there is nothing to confess. I have known a person in thorough bondage to evil thoughts—confessing and confessing, an unending all-day-long business—quite relieved when it was pointed out that if will did not enter into it the intruders might be treated as “Not I.”—WALSALL.

**W**E believe that you are right, speaking broadly, in what you point out. In Romans vi. sin is viewed as a master, imposing its will upon us, bringing us under its power. This it does by reason of the flesh within us, as chapter vii. very plainly shows. Evil thoughts assail us by reason of the flesh within.

All too many Christians are not much troubled *about* evil thoughts, though troubled *with* them. That is because their Christianity

is of a rather feeble, slipshod order. Were they keener and more conscientious they would be more concerned, and more likely to fall into the bondage of which you speak. Still there are earnest and godly souls who do get into the bondage of self-occupation, with almost unending introspection, self-condemnation and confession.

In all this they are probably learning certain useful lessons. But when once they have really learned the hopeless badness of "the flesh," further introspection and self-occupation is a barren waste of time. Christ is the Fountain-Head of all goodness, and the will of God for them is not endless confession of their badness but continued rejoicing in His fulness and power.

"We are the circumcision, which...rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh" (Phil. iii. 3). Let us pass the vote of "no confidence" once for all, so that it is a definitely settled thing with us. Then let us proceed with the happy task of rejoicing in Christ Jesus. If we do so we shall soon discover that as Christ, His glory and His interests increasingly fill our thoughts, the things that are evil less and less come in. This is the way of liberty and of power.

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"If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me" (John xiii. 8). Did they know their need of it; or did He?

The dust of evil, how easily it settles, and without giving alarm. Hence the mirror of conscience is quickly dimmed.

## THE WELL OF BETHLEHEM.

(2 Samuel xxiii. 13-17).

**T**HE beautiful story of the three men who drew water from the well of Bethlehem, is preceded by the account of the great exploits of the three mightiest amongst David's mighty men. Whether they are the same three who broke through the host of the Philistines and drew the water from the well, is not very clear, and probably immaterial. It is, however, important to mark the difference between their great deeds, and the service rendered to David in obtaining the water from the well.

Adino was the chief among the captains. His name means "ornament." Doubtless he filled his exalted position with credit to himself, and advantage to the King, for he had successfully attacked eight hundred of David's enemies, at one time (verse 8).

Eleazar defied the Philistines in the day when the men of Israel turned back. Single handed he arose and smote the enemy, and when victory was assured, the people of Israel, who had left Eleazar to face the enemy alone "returned after him," but "only to spoil." The Lord wrought a great victory through Eleazar, and the Israelites reaped the fruits of victory (verses 9, 10).

Shammah is famous as having "stood in the midst of the ground and defended it," in the day when others fled (verses 11, 12).

In the conflicts of the Lord's people we see these different forms of service. There are times when the Lord calls for an *attack* upon the forces of evil, as in the case of Adino. There are occasions when there is *spoil* to be gained through conflict, as in the day of Eleazar's victory. So too there are times when we are called to stand our ground, and act on the *defensive*, as it was in the day of Shammah's mighty deed.

How important, in their times and seasons, are such mighty deeds. However, whether in David's day, or in our own day, one thing marks such deeds, they are for the benefit of the people, as well as for the glory of the King. When, however, we come to the three mighty men who drew the water from the well, we have a very different form of service. If the victories, we have considered, had the blessing of the people in view, this touching act of service was wholly for the benefit of the King.

These three mighty men "came to David in the harvest time unto the cave of Adullam" (13). It seems as if they left the world in the day of its plenty, to identify themselves with David in the day of his poverty and reproach.

David was in the hold, while a garrison of the Philistines occupied the place of David's early home. David, thinking of the well by the gate of Bethlehem, from which doubtless he had often drawn water in his youth, expresses his longing for a refreshing draught from the well. "Oh," says he, "that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate!" It is no command that requires obedience; it is no call for service; it is only the expression of his longing desire. And yet this expressed desire calls forth this devoted act of love in a way that no command would have done.

Many would have been ready to risk their lives in carrying out some service for the benefit of the kingdom; but these mighty men were ready to face death in order to do something that was wholly for the gratification of the desire of David. They broke through the host of the Philistines, drew water from the well, and brought it to David. This act of devotion delighted the heart of David, and he sees in it a sacrifice of which the Lord alone is worthy. Hence, refusing to drink the water, he pours it out before the Lord.

We, in our day, and according to the spiritual principles of the day, may know at times what it is to attack the powers of evil, to gain spoil from the enemies' ranks, and to stand on the defensive in the conflict for

the truth. We, too, may fight the Lord's battles, but how much do we know of this higher service that does something for the heart of Christ alone? "Oh, that one would give me," says David. Are there not occasions when we can give something to the One who gave everything for us? When as at Bethany, in the day of the Lord, they did something for the One who had done so much for them—when "*they made Him a supper*" who had made a feast for all the world. Do we count it a rare privilege to be able to give to Christ that which will minister joy to His heart?

Was not Mary's service of this elevated character, when, six days before the Pass-over, she anointed the feet of the Lord with her costly ointment and wiped His feet with the hairs of her head? Was she not, in the face of the hatred of enemies and the murmurings of friends, refreshing the heart of the despised and rejected Son of David, against whom, at that very moment, the world was plotting with murderous hate?

And even as the water secured by these devoted men, was poured out before the Lord, so the odour of Mary's ointment goes up before the Lord as a sweet savour. It filled all the house where they were sitting.

Is not David's "Oh, that one would give *me*" a faint anticipation of the Lord's dying request, "Do this in remembrance of *Me*"?

When we answer to this request, we are not fighting the Lord's battles, we are not getting spoil, we are not defending the truth, but we are doing something wholly for Christ; we are ministering to His heart by responding to His love. May we know better what it is to draw water from the well and pour it out before the Lord for the joy of His heart.

HAMILTON SMITH.

### “MADE NICH.”

**F**AVOURED by the Son of God, there was one who enjoyed a special place of nearness to Him; “*Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with Him*” (John xii. 2).

About to be dishonoured in the regal city, Jerusalem, JESUS received royal honour outside at Bethany. There they made Him a supper, which He graciously accepted. Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead, sat with Him. Martha happily served, and Mary expressed becoming appreciation of the One in whose presence they were. Her treasured, fragrant and costly out-pouring filled the house with its sweet odour. Lazarus had good cause to rejoice greatly, and esteem highly the nearness which was his.

When the once rejected Joseph became lord of all Egypt, his brethren, not knowing

who he really was, came before him. He received them, but not at the same table. The Egyptians set on for their lord "by himself and for them by themselves," although "they sat before him." Joseph keenly felt the position; and afterwards said to his brethren, "*Come near to me*, I pray you." And they came *near*. To-day we are brought near, but it is not our doing. "Now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off are *made nigh* by the blood of Christ" (Ephesians ii. 13).

Royal David sent for, and received at his table, lame Mephibosheth; who said to the king, "What is thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am?" Said the royal father, "He shall eat bread *at my table as one of the king's sons*." And in such favoured freedom and nearness, "he did eat bread continually at the king's table." Those who are saved by grace to-day were once "dead in sins," as Ephesians ii, 5 tells us. Now they are "quickened together with Christ." They have access to the Father by the Holy Spirit, being "the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus."

We have not only been redeemed *from* what held us, but we have been redeemed to God by the precious blood of Christ. He Himself went right beneath all our sins to save us, even unto death. But He was raised actually—physically—from among the dead by the glory of the Father, bringing

us along with Himself in life near to Him.

“So near, so very near to God,  
We cannot nearer be,  
For in the Person of His Son,  
We are as near as He.”

We hear the risen Son of God say, “My Father, your Father; My God, your God.” He has set us righteously free in the same relationship before Him. Indeed, Colossians iii. 1 speaks of us as now being “*risen with Christ.*” Bless His Name!

Before that position had been secured for us, Lazarus was one of those that sat at table with Jesus, the Son of God. Lazarus was “dearly loved” by Jesus; and He had brought him forth from death and corruption. How blessed for him to sit at table with the mighty Son of God! Lazarus thus sat “*with Him.*” How do we sit with Him in faith to-day? Righteously made nigh in Him by His own work—made suitable to be there too. Do we rejoice in the nearness which love has made ours? Are we in true liberty there? Do we rest in His holy presence, as those that are “*risen with Christ*”?

Where even “*two or three*” to-day are gathered together to His Name, while He is still rejected, He Himself has said, “*There am I.*” Faith gladly and reverently recognizes His presence. He does not say, “There will I come.” He does not say, “At a certain moment I will present Myself.” No; but, “*There am I. He IS present!*” We

may know this. He is always true to His word. He remains faithful. He never fails.

The faith which rejoices in the greatness and glory of "THE SON" rests in this abiding fact:—"All things subsist together by Him." Surely then, the holy presence personally of such an One among His loved ones involves no difficulty. Resurrection declares Him to be Son of God,—the resurrection of others by Him and His own also. In regard to Lazarus' sickness, He Himself said, This is "for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." And to Martha, when He was about to call him out from among the dead, He said, "If thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God." Resurrection showed this. At His word Lazarus came forth!

It was for His glory, and for the Father's too. This was indicated when Jesus said, "Father, glorify Thy Name." And a voice from heaven said, "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again" (John xii. 28)—"*again*"—pointing on to the resurrection of Jesus Himself.

As "*the Corn of wheat*" He has been in death. And He said, "*If it die it bringeth forth MUCH FRUIT.*" Those "risen with Christ" are now become nigh, during the time of His rejection. But He is coming again in power and royal majesty soon. Then His well loved nation Israel—"the

*Lord's people*”—shall be brought forth like “life from the dead.” And they shall sing, “Blessed be the King!” The saved of the nations too shall awake and arise at the sight of His glory, and “all nations shall call Him blessed!” The much fruit from the death of Jesus shall also be the rejoicing of the heavens, as of the earth too.

Before the national sheaves are gloriously gathered around the true Joseph's sheaf on earth however, Jesus will gather up the heavenly golden grain to His Father's house. “Christ, the Firstfruits,” is there already, gone to prepare a place for us. That special place of glory, of nearness, of liberty and of love, He Himself personally went to prepare. His own prepared place in His Father's house is where He will have His loved ones near Him. “I will come again,” He said, “and receive you *unto Myself*, that *where I am*, there ye may be also.” *WITH JESUS!*—*What more can we desire?*—“For ever *WITH THE LORD!*”

Lazarus was one of those that sat at table with Him in the home at Bethany. We shall be with Him in glory in His Father's house. Near to Him eternally! He is not ashamed to call us brethren even now. But then, all like Him, as predestinated of God, the full fruition of eternal purpose shall appear—*JESUS ALL GLORIOUS among many brethren. Made nigh!*

## “IN THE MIDST.”

Dear Mr. Editor.

A reader of *Edification* commenting on the paper, “In the Midst,” which appeared in your May issue, says that it had given him great pleasure, as the Lord’s presence with His own when gathered to His Name, and especially for the Lord’s Supper, had been very real to him, and that his desire on these occasions is well expressed in the verse,

“O teach us, Lord, Thy searchless love to know,  
 Thou who hast died;  
 Before our feeble faith, Lord Jesus, shew  
 Thy hands and side  
 That our glad hearts, responsive unto Thine,  
 May wake with all the power of love divine.”

But he had been questioned by some as to this, who said they did not understand what he meant by “realizing the Lord’s presence,” and “seeing His hands and side.” They look upon it as something mystical. And he asks for further help on the subject, and for confirmation of what to him is a great reality, unless he is deceived. With your permission I will briefly pursue the subject, which should be of great importance to all who love the Lord Jesus.

First, there is the Lord’s own side to this question, and on this side two things are necessary for His presence in the midst of His own on earth: *His unchanging love and His reliable word*. If His love can wane and cease, and if He can be indifferent

to His word, then we may dismiss the idea, of meeting Him and rejoicing in His presence, as a dream. Every heart that knows Him, knows that these two things are as impossible as it is that God should lie. "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end." His is,

"Love which on this cold earth grows never cold,  
Love which decays not with the world's decay,  
Love which is young when all things else grow old,  
Which lives when heaven and earth shall pass away."

And His word is as immutable as His love is true.

We know that one of the great features of love is the constant desire to be in the company of its object. If it must be at a distance it will communicate with, and labour to the limit of its power for, the loved one; but nothing can satisfy it but its company. We believe that this is most eminently true of the love of our Lord Jesus Christ for His own. He serves us and often communicates precious and comforting thoughts to us, but can He come to us? Is this possible? If it is, we know that He will do it. He is not on earth. He has passed through death, has risen up from the tomb, and ascended up into heaven; and heaven seems so far away sometimes. Can He reach us from His high and exalted place in the glory? Yes, He can, love has found a way, and He has said, "I will not leave you comfortless: *I will come to you*" (John xiv. 18). I know that these words were addressed to

His bewildered and sorrowful disciples, and that they had a very special application and meaning to them, even that they were to SEE Him alive from the dead. They did see Him; they looked with wonder on His wounded hands and side, but they are also good and true words for us and, "*blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed.*"

Consider them, "I will not leave you orphans," for that is the meaning of them—I will not leave you desolate, forlorn, lonely, uncared for. It is all that and more. An orphan may be cared for, and that very tenderly by others, but the heart cries out for the love of relationship. "I want my mother" is the cry that breaks from the heart of the bereaved child. I will not leave you crying out like that for Me, said the Lord, I will come to you. Will He keep His word? Assuredly. His word is as steadfast as the pillars of the throne of God, and His love can be satisfied with nothing less than the company of the loved ones. Then everything is right on His side. What about ours?

On our side three things are necessary. They are *love, faith*, and the *Holy Spirit*. Perhaps I ought to have put the Holy Spirit first, for every impulse towards the Lord is from Him; but He must direct the impulse also and sustain it and make it bear its full fruit in Christ's own assembly. And

not the Holy Spirit alone is active, but the Father also. Read verses 16 and 17 of John xiv. The Lord was going away, but His love would find a way by which He could meet His loved ones. He would pray the Father, and the Father's interest in these disciples, beloved of the Lord, would be so great that He would send the Holy Spirit to dwell in them, that the Lord might not seek their company in vain, or love them without response. Full provision has been made.

Is our love for the Lord enough to make us long for His company? Do we miss Him in the world where we have to live and do business? Are we like the bride in Solomon's Song, who searched for her lover, and said, "I sought him, but I could not find him," and said to the watchmen, "Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?" He is not in the world's busy marts or in its haunts of pleasure; our hearts cannot be satisfied in any of these. Do we cry out for the company of the Lord? Would you, for instance, like to meet your Saviour? If your answer is, "Yes, yes, above all things that is my desire," then there is one thing more, Do you believe His word? He has said, "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them," and "I will come to you." Is that enough? If so, with what joy we shall hasten to this tryst. His presence, realized by the Spirit, will be real to affection and faith, and holy subjection to Him,

the Lord, will most surely result. And the heart that has known it can never forget it; and there where His presence is, where He is supreme in the midst of His own, is His assembly. There He shews His hands and side—i.e., He brings afresh to adoring hearts the sense of the love that made Him suffer, and He will do this until He comes to rapture His church to glory.

J. T. MAWSON.

## A HEART CONTROLLED BY CHRIST.

(From Notes of an Address on *John* xx. 11-18).

THE narratives and miracles of *John's* gospel refer much to the subject of *Life*. *Matthew* presents to us the *Goodness* of God—"rain on the just and on the unjust"—and leads to repentance, of which we hear so much in that Gospel. *Luke* presents to us the subject of *Grace* and speaks more of Salvation than any other Gospel.

*John* has its character in love and life. Salvation is not the full purpose of God, but we are saved to *live*.

Mary's history as recorded in *Luke* viii. 2, is in keeping with the gospel in which it is written, and shews the grace that had met and saved her.

This is the way God takes to make us appreciate the Saviour whom He has

sent. He makes the Lord Jesus Christ (for whom naturally we have neither eyes nor heart) indispensable to our very existence. Here grace met Mary in her need and saved her out of it that she might live in divine love. Love it was that brought her to the sepulchre and love it was that kept her there. She does not come there to be loved by Him but just for His own sake. She was in distress and it was His absence that caused it. The world was a blank to her because He was gone! Her *home* was in the presence of the Lord—without Him she had no home. Peter and John might go to their home, but she had none to go to.

At first the angels were a sight for Mary; but what a sight Mary was for angels! Here was a heart once possessed by Satan, now it is possessed by the love of Christ.

She could get no consolation from angels, but she ultimately became the greatest of all apostles for the moment.

She waits still at the sepulchre to get in touch with the Lord. She was found at the last place whither they had traced Him: she lingers at the sepulchre weeping. She that seeketh findeth, and she found far more than she ever sought.

She sought a dead Christ and she found a living Christ. "He that loveth Me . . . I will love him and will manifest Myself to him" (John xiv. 21).

Angels might say, "Why weepest Thou?" but He could touch a deeper spring and say, "Whom seekest thou?"

Her answer to the angels was, "They have taken away *my Lord*, and I know not where they have laid Him."

Jesus stood behind and said, "Why weepest thou?" also, but adding, "Whom seekest thou?" It would give the impression that He wanted to hear her say over again, "*My Lord.*" How sweet to His ear! Have you ever been near enough to the Lord in secret to look up into His face and whisper in His ear, "My Lord!"

He said to her "Mary."—and instantly two hearts were together. She would have held Him but He says, No. "Touch me not"—There is another heart to be revealed—My Father! He said, "Go to My brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God."

She became a vessel meet for the Master's use. It was not John, not Peter, who were thus commissioned. She became an apostle to the apostles; and in her message we get Christianity in embryo. And His message signified that He was bringing those whom He loved into the same circle of love and relationship and into the same intimacy of love with Himself.

Thus it is that love gets as its answer the revelation of the Father; i.e. Christianity in its true character. ART CUTTING.

## OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

(*Romans vii. 23—viii. 14*).

Owing to the length of this epistle we have made our remarks briefer and more condensed than usual. It will therefore be more than ever necessary to refer to the Scripture itself as you read this article.

**A**S we draw near to the end of chapter vii. it is important for us to notice that in this passage the word *law* is used in two senses. In the great majority of instances it refers of course to the law of God formulated through Moses. In verses 2 and 3 however we get "the law" of a husband; in verse 21, "a law"; in verses 23 and 25, "another law," "the law of my mind," and "the law of sin." In these cases the word is evidently used to signify a power or force which acts uniformly in a given direction: in just the sense in which we use the word when we talk of "the laws of nature."

If then we read again the above verses, substituting the words, "controlling force" for the word, "law," we may gain a somewhat clearer view of what the Apostle is saying. Take verse 23. The controlling force with each of us should be our minds: our bodies should be held in the subject place. This should be so in a very special way with those whose minds have been re-

newed by the power of God. But there is sin to be reckoned with, which exerts its controlling force in our members. The terrible fact has to be faced by us, and experimentally learned, that if left to ourselves, sin proves itself the stronger force, assumes control and we are held in captivity.

No wonder the Apostle in the remembrance of it cries out in anguish, "O wretched man that I am!" We too know something of this wretchedness, surely. Have we never felt ourselves to be like a wretched seagull bedraggled from head to tail with filthy oil discharged from passing motor-ships? The law of its mind, the law of air both without and within its feathers, is totally overcome by the horrid law of sticky oil! And who shall deliver it? It has no power in itself. Unless someone captures and cleanses it, it must die.

Verse 24 contains not only the agonized exclamation but also that important question, "Who shall deliver me?" The form of the question is important. Earlier in the story, when the speaker was passing through the experiences detailed in verses 14 to 19 for instance, his question would have been, "How shall I deliver myself?" He was still searching for something *within* himself which would accomplish it, but searching in vain. Now he is beginning to look *outside* himself for a deliverer.

When not only our self-confidence but our self-hope also is shattered, we have taken a big step forward. We inevitably then begin to look outside ourselves. At first perhaps we only look for *help*, and consequently look in wrong directions. Yet sooner or later we discover it is not help that we need, but rather a positive *deliverance* by a power that is not of ourselves at all. Then, very soon, we find the answer to our cry. Deliverance is ours through Jesus Christ our Lord, thanks be to God! He is as able to deliver us from the slavery of sin as He is from the guilt of our sins.

But how does this deliverance work? How is it accomplished? We find an answer to these questions when we commence to read chapter viii. At the end of chapter vii. the law of sin and death proved itself far more powerful than the law of the renewed mind. In the opening of chapter viii. the law of the Spirit, who is now given to the believer, proves itself far more powerful than the law of sin and death. The Apostle can exultingly say, It has "made me free."

Not only have we life in Christ Jesus but the Spirit of that life has been given to us. Thereby a new force enters our lives. Coming under the controlling power of the Spirit of God we are released from the controlling power of sin and death. The greater law overrides the lesser.

The point may be illustrated by many happenings in the natural world which surrounds us. Here, for instance, is a piece of iron. It lies motionless upon the ground, held to the spot by the law of gravitation. An electric magnet is placed above it and the current is switched on. Instantly it flies upward, as though suddenly possessed of wings. A new controlling power has come on the scene which, under certain conditions and in a limited sphere, has proved itself stronger than the power of gravitation.

The Holy Spirit has been given to us that He may control us, not that we may control Him. How does He exert His influence? He works within the believer, but it is in connection with an attractive Object without—Christ Jesus our Lord. He is here not to speak of Himself or to glorify Himself, but to glorify Christ. He indwells us, not that He may foster the old life, the life of the first Adam; the life of which He is the Spirit is the life of Christ, the last Adam. We are “in Christ Jesus,” as the first verse shows, and we are that without any qualification whatever, for the words which close the verse in our Authorized Version should not be there, having evidently crept in from verse 4, where they rightly occur.

There is nothing to condemn in Christ Jesus, and nothing to condemn for those in Christ Jesus. The reason for this is two-

fold. Verses 2 and 3 each supply a reason, both beginning with "for." Verse 2 gives the practical or experimental reason. The believer under the control of the Spirit is set free from the control of that which formerly brought the condemnation in. Being a statement of a liberty which has to be experimentally realized the Apostle speaks still in a personal and individual way—"hath made *me* free."

Verse 3, on the contrary, is a statement of what has been accomplished by God in a judicial way at the cross of Christ. The law had been proved to be weak through the flesh, though in itself holy and just and good. It was like a skilful sculptor set to the task of carving an enduring monument—some thing of beauty intended to be a joy for ever—out of a great heap of dirty mud. A heart-breaking, a hopeless task, not because of any defect in the sculptor but because of the utterly defective material with which he had to deal. The law could condemn the sinner, but it could not so condemn sin in the flesh that men might be delivered from servitude to sin and, walking after the Spirit, be found fulfilling what the law had righteously required.

But what the law could not do God has done. He sent forth His own Son, who came in the likeness of sinful flesh—only in the *likeness* of it, be it noted, for though perfectly a Man He was a perfect Man,

without the slightest taint of sin. God sent Him "for sin," that is, as a sacrifice for sin; so that in His death sin in the flesh might be condemned. Sin is the root principle of all that is wrong with man; and the flesh is that in man which furnishes sin with a vehicle in which to act, just as the electricity generated in a power station finds a vehicle for its transmission and action in the wires that are carried aloft.

We know that sin had its primary origin in the heavens. It began with Satan and the fallen angels, yet Christ did not come to die for angels and consequently it was not sin in the nature of angels which was condemned. He died for men, and it was sin in the flesh that was condemned. It was *condemned*, you notice, not forgiven. God does indeed forgive sins, which spring forth as the fruits of sin in the flesh; but sin—the root principle—and the flesh—the nature in which sin works—are not forgiven but unsparingly condemned. God has condemned it in the cross of Christ. We must learn to condemn it in our experience.

We are to judge as God judges. We are to see things as He sees them. If sin and the flesh lie under His condemnation then they are to lie under our condemnation. Sin and the flesh being judged in the cross, the Holy Spirit has been given to us that He may energize the new life that is ours. If we walk in the Spirit then all our activi-

ties, both mental and bodily, will be under His control, and as a consequence we shall be found doing what the law requires.

Herein, of course, is a marvellous thing. When under the law and in the flesh we were struggling to fulfil the law's demands and continually failing. Now that we are delivered from the law, now that we are in Christ Jesus and indwelt by the Spirit of God, there is a power which can enable us to fulfil it. And as we do walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh, and according to the measure in which we so walk, we do actually fulfil what the law has so rightly demanded of us. This is a great triumph of the grace of God. As a matter of fact though, the triumph may be even greater, for it is possible for the Christian "so to walk even as He [Christ] walked" (1 John ii. 6). And the "walk" of Christ went far beyond anything that the law demanded.

We may sum up these things by saying that the Christian—according to the thoughts of God—is not only forgiven, justified, reconciled, with the Spirit shedding abroad in his heart the love of God; but also he sees the divine condemnation of sin and the flesh in the Cross, he finds that his own vital links before God are not with Adam fallen but with Christ risen. Consequently he is in Christ Jesus, with the Spirit indwelling him, in order that, controlling him and filling him with Christ, as an Object bright and fair before his eyes, he may walk in happy

deliverance from the power of sin and be gladly fulfilling the will of God.

Nothing less than this is what the Gospel proposes. What do we think of it? We pronounce it magnificent. We declare the whole scheme to be a conception worthy of the mind and heart of God. Then our consciences begin to prick us, reminding us how little these wonderful possibilities have been translated into actualities in our daily experience.

The Apostle Paul, you notice, did not lay down his pen nor turn aside to another theme when he had written verse 4. There is more to be said that may help us to gain a real and experimental entrance into this blessed deliverance so that we may be living out the life of Christ in the energy of the Spirit of God. Verses 5 to 13 continue taking things up from a very practical standpoint.

Two classes are considered. Those "after" or "according to" the flesh and those according to the Spirit. The former mind the things of the flesh: the latter the things of the Spirit. The mind of the flesh is death: the mind of the Spirit life and peace. The two classes are in complete contrast, whether as to nature, character or end. They move in two totally disconnected spheres. The Apostle is of course speaking abstractly. He is viewing the whole position

according to the inward nature of things, and not thinking of particular individuals or their varying experiences.

We may very rightly raise the question of our own experiences. If we do, what have we to say? We have to confess that though we are not after the flesh yet we have the flesh still in us. Hence it is possible for us to turn aside from that minding the things of the Spirit, to mind the things of the flesh. And, in so far as we do, we come into contact with death rather than life and peace. But let us make no mistake about it; if we go in for the things of the flesh, we are not seeking things which are properly characteristic of the Christian, but rather wholly abnormal and improper.

The things of the flesh appeal to the mind of the flesh, and *that* is simple enmity against God. This saying which occurs in verse 7 may seem hard, but it is true, for the flesh is essentially lawless. Not only is it not subject but it cannot be. Do we believe that? Let the flesh be educated, refined, religionized; let it be starved, flogged, restrained; it is just the old flesh still. The only thing to do with it is to condemn it and set it aside, and this is just what God has done, as stated in verse 3. May we have wisdom and grace to do likewise.

It is clear that since the mind of the flesh is simply enmity against God, those "in the flesh" cannot please Him. If we would

see a complete contrast with this we must turn to 1 John iii. 9. There we find that the one born of God "cannot sin." All who are not born of God are in the flesh; that is, their state is characterized by the flesh and nothing else. There is no new nature with them, and hence the flesh is the source of all their thinkings and doings, and all is displeasing to God. The one who is born of God partakes of the nature of Him of whom he is born.

But not only is the believer born of God, he is also indwelt by the Spirit of God, who seals him as Christ's. This great reality entirely alters his state. Now he is no longer in the flesh but in the Spirit; that is, his state is characterized by the presence and power of the Spirit of God, who is also called in verse 9 the Spirit of Christ. There is but one and the self-same Spirit yet the change in the descriptive title is significant. Christ is He from whom we derive our origin spiritually, the One to whom we belong. If indeed we are His, we are possessed of His Spirit, and consequently should be Christ-like in our spirits, so really so that all may see that Christ is in us.

According to verse 10 He *is* in us if His Spirit indwells us, and hence we are not to be ruled by our bodies. They are to be held as dead, for acting they only lead to sin. The Spirit is to be the Energizer of our lives and then the outcome will be right-

eousness. To do the will of God is practical righteousness.

Our bodies are spoken of as "mortal bodies" in verse 11. They are subject to death, indeed the seeds of death are in them from the outset. At the coming of the Lord they are to be quickened. The God who raised up Christ from the dead will accomplish this by His Spirit. In this connection we have a further description of the Holy Spirit. He is "the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead." Indwelling us in this character, He is the pledge of the coming quickening, whether it reach us in resurrection of the body or in the change to be wrought in the bodies of saints who are alive and remain to the Lord's coming.

The conclusion to be drawn from all that we have just been considering is that the flesh has no claim upon us whatever. It has been judged in the Cross. It is antagonistic to God, irreconcilably so, and we are not "in the flesh." We are indwelt by the Spirit, and "in the Spirit." We are therefore in no way debtors to the flesh that we should live after it, for life according to the flesh has but one end—death. The Spirit is in us that we may live according to Him. That means putting to death the deeds of the body, refusing practically its promptings and desires. That is the way to what is really life according to God.

What great importance all this gives to the indwelling of the Spirit of God. He produces an altogether new state or condition in the believer, and He gives character to the state that He produces. He is the power of Christian life in the believer, the Energy that breaks the power of sin and sets us free. But He is more than this for He is an actual Person indwelling us, and so taking charge of us.

In the bygone dispensation the Jew was under the law as a schoolmaster or tutor. It took him by the hand as though he were a child under age, and led him until such time as Christ came. Now Christ having come we are no longer under the schoolmaster but like sons of full age in our father's house. Not only are we sons but we possess the Spirit of God's Son. All this we find in Galatians iii. and iv. Verse 14 of our chapter refers to this truth.

Those who were in the position of minors were put under law as a schoolmaster, and were led by it. We who have received the Spirit of God and are led by Him are the sons of God. Christ is the Captain of our salvation, gone on high. The Spirit indwells us on earth, as our Leader in the way that goes up to glory. Praise be unto our God! Our hearts should indeed be filled with everlasting praise.

F. B. HOLE.

## GRACE AND GLORY.

(Psalm lxxxiv.).

**T**HIS beautiful Psalm gives prophetically the latter day experiences of the godly remnant of Israel, when, delivered from their long captivity, they travel back to God's dwelling place in Zion.

The spirit of grace that breathes throughout the Psalm makes it easier, than in many other Psalms, to draw from it an application to the Christian, as he too passes on his pilgrim way to the Father's house on high.

There are three themes which mark the three divisions of the Psalm.

(1) The beauty of the house of God, to which he is travelling, and the blessedness of those who dwell within that house (1-4).

(2) The experiences in the path that lead to the house, and the blessedness of the one who treads this path (5-7).

(3) The comfort of prayer, and the blessedness of the man who confides in the Lord (8-12).

Thus there is brought before us a three-fold blessedness. The blessedness of dwelling where God dwells: the blessedness that is found in treading the path that leads to God's dwelling; and the blessedness of trusting in God while treading that path (4, 5, 12).

#### THE DWELLING OF GOD. (Verses 1-4).

The Psalm opens with an expression of delight in the house of God—"How amiable [or how "lovely"] are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts." The godly soul sees that he is called to dwell with God, in God's own dwelling. What makes that dwelling so lovely to the soul of the Psalmist is that God Himself is there—the living God. Everything in those courts speaks of the glory of God. There God is fully displayed, and being fully displayed can be fully known. The soul longs to reach those courts of glory, the heart and the flesh cannot be satisfied apart from the living God.

In like spirit the Christian looks on to the Father's house. A house where everything speaks of God the Father. The believer finds himself in a scene of contrariety where the godly suffer; where evil is in-

creasing, both in the world and among the professing people of God; where the will of man prevails and the glory of man is displayed; and where, to sight, there is no intervention of God—God apparently being silent and still. Nevertheless, faith knows that God lives, and faith looks on to the dwelling place of God. There it will be manifested that God is the living God, and all declares the glory of God. The home to which we are going is indeed perfect in holiness and love; but what would a perfect scene be without the One to whom the home belongs, and without Christ, the One who makes the Father known?

The soul of the true Israelite realizes that the One who finds a home for the worthless bird, and a rest for the restless bird, has surely a resting place for His people—"Thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God." The Christian can say that God has found a resting place for His people in the accepted sacrifice of Christ—"Whom God has set forth a mercy seat, through faith in His blood, . . . to declare at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

If, however, God has secured a solid resting place for His people in His altar, it is in order to bring His people to dwell with Him in His house. In that dwelling "They will be constantly praising Thee" (verse 4, N.Tr.). If Christ becomes the great

sacrifice on the altar of Calvary, it is to secure a praising people for God in His house. The One who uttered the cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" alone could give the answer, "But Thou art holy, O Thou that dwellest amid the praises of Israel" (Psa. xxii. 1-3, (N. Tr.)). He died to meet the holiness of God, and secure a praising people. There rises up before our vision the loveliness of the dwelling place of God—where God will dwell in the midst of a praising people,

There will Thy love find perfect rest,  
Where all around is bliss,  
Where all in Thee supremely blest,  
Thy praise their service is.

### THE HIGHWAYS. (Verses 5-7).

Very happily the Psalm opens with the blessedness of the dwelling place of God. Then it sets before us the path that leads to that dwelling place. This, too, is the way of the Lord when unfolding the truth to His disciples in the last discourses. He does not tell them of the trials by the way, and then end His discourses by presenting before them the blessedness of the Father's house. The Lord takes a better way: He commences the discourse, of John xiv., by unfolding the loveliness of the Father's house. Before we are called to face the journey, with its trials and difficulties, we are assured of the blessedness of the home to which it leads. Like the Psalmist we

take the journey through the valley, in the light of the City that is set on a hill.

This journey is brought before us in verses 5-7. In verse 5, we are viewed as treading the highways—we are *passing on*. In verse 6, we are in a valley of tears, which we are *passing through*. In verse 7, Zion is in sight—we are *passing in*. The “highways” that lead to Zion pass through an enemy’s land. At times the way may seem long, and rough, and dreary, and the soul may long and faint for the end of the journey. Thus the very first need will be strength for the journey. This strength can alone be found in God; hence the Psalmist says, “Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee.” The passage in the New Testament, that above all others, marks out the pilgrim path in an evil day, opens with the exhortation, “Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. ii. 1). If the dwelling place of God is an object to the heart, the way that leads there, will have a place in the heart. If the pilgrim path has little attraction for our hearts, does it not tell a tale of hearts that have been little touched with the sense of the blessedness of the home on high to which we have been called.

The character of the path is then brought before us. It passes through the valley of weeping (for such is the better translation). It is not simply a valley of trial,

but a valley of *weeping*. The "weeping" speaks not merely of trials, but of the *experiences in the trials*. The trials, in themselves, might harden; the experiences learned in the trials—the "weeping," that expresses the deep feelings of the soul before God in the trials—become a source of blessing to the soul. The one who draws his strength from God, and brings his sorrows to God, will turn the "valley of weeping" into a "well-spring" of spiritual blessing. In the spirit of the Psalmist the Apostle can say to Timothy that he was "mindful of his tears." It was not only that he was mindful of the trials of Timothy, but of the "tears" that were called forth by the trials.

Moreover, in the highway that leads to the house of God there is "the early-rain" that "covereth it with blessings" (verse 6, N. Tr.). The rain speaks of that which comes from above—all that ministry of Christ which the Spirit of God brings from above to refresh and gladden the heart. The word is really "early-rain," and refers to the soft and gentle rain that refreshes the ground in seed time (Deut. xi. 14). The "valley of weeping" prepares the soul to receive the gracious ministry of Christ from above.

Thus the soul, refreshed by the well-spring from beneath, and the early rain from above, passes onward from strength to strength. These words hardly imply a store of strength,

to which strength is ever being added—however much strength may increase. They set forth, rather, a fresh supply of strength from day to day.

The assured end of the journey is that “(each one) will appear before God in Zion” (verse 7, N. Tr.). We may, and alas! we do, break down on the journey. We may halt on the way, we may grow weary of the way, we may follow on faint yet pursuing; but in spite of all failure and feebleness “Each one will appear before God in Zion.” If the Lord has said, “My sheep . . . shall never perish,” we may be sure that all His sheep will reach home at last. They pass on their way: one by one they go out of our sight, but “Each one appears before God in Zion.” *And there at last shall they meet.*

Away with our sorrow and fear!  
 We soon shall have enter'd our home,  
 The heavenly city appear,  
 The day of our glory have come!  
 All tears shall have passed from our eyes  
 When Him we behold in the cloud,  
 And taste the full joy of the skies,  
 The love of our Father and God.

#### THE PRAYER. (verses 8-12)

The Psalm closes with the prayer of the godly soul who takes this path that leads to the house of God. Very blessedly he appeals to “the God of hosts” and “the God of Jacob.” The Psalmist turns to God with a sense of His Divine Majesty and

power as the God of hosts ; and to One who has all (grace, and with whom he is in covenant relationship, as the God of Jacob. With Jacob God entered into relationship on the ground of sovereign grace, and with failing Jacob all through his wanderings God showed all grace. The God of power and the God of grace, with whom we are in relationship, is the One who alone can bring us on our way to glory.

Then, in his prayer, the Psalmist expresses the ground of his confidence in looking to God, "Behold O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed." Who but Christ is God's anointed? The basis of all our blessing—the ground of all our confidence—is that Christ is all that God would have Him to be, and has done all that God requires to be done, in order that His grace may flow out in blessing to unworthy sinners. God looks upon Christ as One who was anointed to do the great work, and God is satisfied with Christ and His finished work. Thus God can be a shield to the believer. He can shelter him from judgment, death, and all the power of the enemy, because of what He has found in Christ. Well, indeed, for the soul to ever plead the satisfaction that God has found in Christ, and say "Look upon the face of thine anointed."

In the light of the coming glory the world, and all that it can offer is left behind. What can the tents of wickedness offer in compari-

son with the courts of the Lord? A day in His courts is better than a thousand spent in the most favourable circumstances in the dwellings of men. At best the world has but a temporary tent for its dwelling: the Lord brings us to an eternal home.

With the God of power and grace before his soul; blessed and accepted in the Anointed; with His back on the world and his face to the glory, the believer can pursue his way in all the blessed sense that God is a sun and a shield. He is a light to guide us in a dark world, and a shield to protect us from an evil world. Day by day, He gives the needed grace; and grace begun on earth will end in glory on high. Nothing but glory is the suited answer to His grace. The eternal weight of glory is the only adequate answer to the exceeding riches of His grace. At the start of our journey grace sought and found us, at the end glory awaits us. Between the grace at the start and the glory at the end, "No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly."

Thus assured of "grace," "glory" and every "good thing," the soul may well conclude, "Blessed is the man that trusteth in Thee." Well may we sing:—

Haste thee on from grace to glory,  
Armed by faith, and winged by prayer,  
Heaven's eternal day's before thee,  
God's right hand shall guide thee there.

HAMILTON SMITH.

## “GOD . . . FOR US.”

**I**N these three words we find the source and strength of the Christian's blessing.

If He be for us—on our part—who can be against us? If in the love of His heart He has undertaken our cause, who can withstand His power and wisdom and skill?

### GOD FOR US IN GIVING HIS SON.

He has shown Himself to be for us in that He gave His own Son, His well-beloved One, to bring us near to Himself in righteousness. We were far away from Him, in the darkness and distance of sin, having no desire after Him. If we could have hidden ourselves from His all-searching eye we should have done so. We desired none of His ways. We feared the judgment which was our due. The thought of the intent of our heart was only evil continually.

*Then* it was that He loved us. Not on account of our being lovable in ourselves, for we were not. On the contrary we were hateful. But because of what *He* is in Himself, He loved us. And in that unsearchable love He gave His only Son, so that we should not perish, but that we might have everlasting life.

None other could be found in heaven or on earth who could meet our need. None other was great enough to bear the judgment and to exhaust it. But He was given and in

love He came and suffered and died on our behalf. "God commendeth His love towards us"—His own especial peculiar love—"in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us."

### GOD FOR US IN JUSTIFYING US.

The atoning work being done and God being glorified thereby in every attribute of His being, the way has been opened in which we may be set free from all charge. And the moment a sinner believes the good news of the Gospel, that moment he stands justified. And "it is God that justifieth." Who then shall condemn? Notice the following truths as to this.

*It is GOD that justifieth.* It was against Him that we had sinned and it is He who forgives and who clears us righteously. (Rom. viii. 33.)

*It is by His grace.* That is, it is in free undeserved favour on His part without any merit or title on ours.

*It is "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."* God is righteous in counting the believer righteous, because, Christ Jesus suffered for sins and has obtained eternal redemption for us at Calvary. (Rom. iii. 24).

*It is by faith before God.* This is the hand which is put out to receive the free

gift of God, and " *all* that believe *are* justified"—and they are justified from *all* things. (Rom. v. 1.)

*It is witnessed by works before men.* The life of the Christian bears testimony to what has come to pass in his conversion. (Jas. ii. 24).

### GOD FOR US IN CARING FOR US IN OUR LIFE.

Though loved so freely and justified so fully the Christian has to pass through a world of trial and difficulty. His path, if faithful to Christ, is not likely to be a smooth or easy one. He has the flesh with. The world with its snares is around him. The great enemy, Satan, is against him. Well might he be filled with fear. But he is not sent to war at his own charges. **GOD IS FOR US.** Not only *was* He for us when He justified us from all our sins and sinfulness. He *IS* for us now and will be **FOR US** in unchanging love and power right on through life's journey. And He with consummate skill and in unwearying love causes all things to work together for our good. He has called us to His glory and on the way moulds and fashions every circumstance for our true and everlasting benefit. By and by we shall see how this has come to pass, but even now in the confidence of faith we may sing,

“With mercy and with judgment,  
My web of time He wove ;  
And aye the dews of sorrow,  
Were lusted with His love.

and the day draws near of which we add,

“I'll bless the hand that guarded,  
I'll bless the heart that planned ;  
When throned where glory dwelleth  
In Immanuel's land.”

Happy are we who know that God is  
“for us.”

INGLIS FLEMING.

## “AND NOW ABIDETH . . . THESE THREE.”

**S**CIENTISTS will tell you that number  
is stamped on creation in a very won-  
derful way. The celebrated Herschel  
pointed out that every law in nature tends  
to express itself in terms of arithmetic. The  
astronomer will tell you it is stamped on the  
stars. The botanist will tell you it is  
stamped on the vegetable kingdom. The  
zoologist will tell you it is seen in the animal  
kingdom. Even the very frozen crystals on  
the window pane will tell the same tale.

Take the number three as one instance.  
In the case of the bee the following  
phenomena are striking.

In three days the egg of the queen bee  
is hatched.

It is fed for nine days ( $3 \times 3$ )

It reaches maturity in fifteen days  
( $5 \times 3$ )

The worker reaches maturity in 21 days

(7 × 3)

The drone matures in 24 days (8 × 3)

Under the body are six wax scales  
with which the comb is made (2 × 3)

It has six legs (2 × 3)

The antennæ consist of 9 sections

(3 × 3)

The sting has nine barbs on each side

(3 × 3).

Is this design or mere chance? We see the wisdom of the Creator in this, especially as we could furnish numberless examples just as striking as the illustration we have chosen. If this is true in the realm of nature, we are not surprised to find Scripture stamped with design in number.

We propose to consider the way the number *three* is presented in Scripture. There are two thoughts connected with it.

First, it stands for what is solid and substantial. Two dimensions can only produce lines, which you can trace on the paper, or on other material. But give three dimensions, length, breadth and depth, and you have a cube, something of solidity and substance.

Second, we are told in Scripture that "in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established" (Matthew xviii. 16). This sets forth the thought of full witness, or ample manifestation.

Let us look at a few Scriptural instances.

There are three Persons in the Godhead—Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Till the Lord Jesus revealed the Father by His coming into this world as the Son sent of the Father, God was not known in His fulness. Moreover, it waited the advent of the Spirit of God on the day of Pentecost to complete the fulness of the revelation in the apprehension of the believer, for the Holy Spirit is the power by which these things are known and enjoyed.

There are three attributes in the Godhead—Omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence—unlimited power, unlimited knowledge, unlimited presence.

There are three offices the Lord sustains—Prophetic, Priestly and Kingly—Prophet, the One who can bring the conscience into the presence of God; Priest, the One, who can sustain the worshipper in the presence of God; King, the One, who will uphold the rule of God in this world.

The Lord Jesus is spoken of as (1) the Good Shepherd (John x. 14); (2) the Great Shepherd (Hebrews xiii. 20); (3) the Chief Shepherd (1 Peter v. 4)—the Good Shepherd in giving His life for the sheep; the Great Shepherd in His glorious resurrection; the Chief Shepherd in His second coming, when He will reward the under shepherds.

In 1 Corinthians xv., that great resurrection chapter, He is presented as the One (1) who died for our sins, (2) who was buried, and (3) who was seen by many witnesses, proof of His resurrection, proving the character of His death and His object in dying. Here we have three things again, full testimony to Christ in His work for the believer.

Again He is described as the "Lord God Almighty, (1) which was, and (2) is, and (3) which is to come" (Revelation iv. 8), taking the three divisions of time to affirm the eternity of the being of the Lord. Again in the same verse the living creatures say three times, "Holy, Holy, Holy," surely once for God the Father, once for God the Son, once for God the Holy Spirit.

Three times over did our Lord in the wilderness quote Scripture in His conflict with the devil. "It is written" (Matthew iv. 4, 7, 10); and with these three cuts of the sword of the Spirit defeated the enemy.

These three quotations repelled the three-fold temptation that Satan knows so well how to yield, viz., "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1 John ii. 16), temptation to which our first parents yielded in the Garden of Eden, and to which every child of Adam has succumbed since. This was the first time that Satan was absolutely foiled.

The inscription on the Saviour's cross was written in three languages, “It was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin” (John xix. 20)—Hebrew, the language of the Jews, to whom the Lord was sent; Greek, the language of commerce in those days, of the cultured and artistic; Latin, the language of the Roman, under whose iron sway lay the whole civilised world. Evidently the message was to be sent in its fulness of testimony to mankind wherever found.

It is the three parts of man, spirit, soul and body, “that the Apostle Paul prays “may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thessalonians v. 23); whilst the three enemies of mankind are the world, the flesh, and the devil—the World, that which is spread out before us to tempt us to sin and luxury and self-seeking; the Flesh, that which is marked by inward passions and lusts; the Devil, that crafty foe, who never tires of waging his warfare against Christ's interests in this world, the King and Organiser of the underworld of infernal wickedness.

There are three men in Scripture that stand as types of apostasy, Cain, Balaam and Core (Jude 11).

There are three witnesses to the believer, “the Spirit and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one” (1 John v.

8)—the Spirit, the One who works in sovereign grace in our hearts, who takes the divine initiative in His approach to our souls; the Water, that application of the word of God to our souls that cleanses our ways; the Blood, that which cleanses our sins away from the eye of God.

Lastly there are the three great Christian virtues extolled in 1 Corinthians xiii. 13, "And now abideth faith, hope, charity [love], these three; but the greatest [here we get one of the three comparisons of the adjective] of these is charity [love]"—Faith, that gives the vision of things beyond the reach of the natural eye; Hope, that gives us quietness in waiting for the glorious future that lies before the believer; Love, that divine quality that will exist for ever; for faith will yield to glorified sight, and hope will pass into glad realization, but love, the very nature of God, will abide for ever. Hallelujah!

So we might go on and a volume might be written; and yet blind men will tell us that the Bible is not inspired! If it were not inspired we should soon exhaust its contents. On the contrary the deepest student of God's Word is conscious that he has only touched the merest fringe of the mighty ocean of revelation. Thank God, for the Scriptures of truth!

## OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

*(Romans viii. 14-39.)*

Owing to the length of this epistle we have made our remarks briefer and more condensed than usual. It will therefore be more than ever necessary to refer to the Scripture itself as you read this article.

**W**E have in our chapter a wonderful unfolding of truth concerning the Spirit of God. We have seen Him, in verse 2, as the new law of the believer's life. In verse 10, He is presented to us as life, in an experimental sense. In verse 14 He is the Leader, under whose guardianship we have been placed while on our way to glory.

Further He sustains the character of a Witness, as we find in verse 16. Being made sons of God we have received the Spirit of adoption, and two results flow out of this. First, we are able to respond to the relationship which has been established, turning to God with the cry of, "Abba, Father." Second, the Spirit gives us the conscious enjoyment of the relationship. We know in our own spirits that something has happened, which has brought us out of darkness into light. The Spirit corroborates this, bearing witness to what has happened, even that we are now children of God.

The witness goes even beyond this, for if we are children then are we heirs, and that jointly with Christ; for by the Spirit we are united to Christ, though that truth

is not developed in this Epistle. What amazing truth is this! How often does our very familiarity with the words blind us to the import of them! Let us meditate on these things so that there may be time for the truth to sink unto our hearts.

The chapter opened with the fact that we are in Christ, if true believers. Then we found that having the Spirit of Christ, Christ is in us. Now we come to the fact that we are identified with Him, both in present suffering and in future glory. The point here is not that we suffer for Christ in the way of testimony and that glory is to be our reward hereafter: that we find elsewhere. The point rather is that being in Him and He in us we share in His life and circumstances, whether here in sufferings or there in glory.

This leads the Apostle to consider the contrast between present sufferings and future glory, which contrast is worked out in the paragraph comprised in verses 18 to 30, though it is at once stated in very forcible words that the sufferings are not worthy of any comparison with the glory.

The same contrast is drawn in 2 Corinthians iv. 17, and even more graphic language is employed; "A far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." In our passage the matter is considered with greater wealth of detail. The paragraph seems to fall into three sections. First, the charac-

ter of the coming glory. Second, the believer's comfort and encouragement in the midst of the sufferings. Third, the purpose of God which secures the glory.

First, then, the glory is connected with the manifestation of the sons of God. The sons will be manifested when the Son, who is the Firstborn and Heir, is revealed in His glory. Then the creature (that is, the *creation*) will be delivered from the bondage of corruption and share in "the liberty of the glory of the sons of God." (N. Tr.) It has well been remarked that the creation does not share in the liberty of grace which we enjoy even amidst the sufferings, but it will share in the liberty of the glory. The creation was not made subject to vanity by its own will but rather as the result of the sin of the one to whom it was subject; that is, of Adam. And creation is represented as anxiously looking out in hope of the deliverance which will arrive with the manifestation of the glory. When the sons are publicly glorified the year of release and jubilee will have come for the whole creation. What glory that will be! How do present sufferings look in the light of it?

Still there are these sufferings, whether for the creation as a whole or for ourselves in particular. Verse 22 speaks of the former. Verses 23 and 26 of the latter. We have infirmities, as well as the groans

which are the fruit of pain, whether physical or mental. What then, in the second place, have we to sustain us in the midst of it all?

The answer is again that we have the Spirit, and He is presented to us in three further capacities which He fills. He is the Firstfruits (v. 23), the Helper and the Intercessor (v. 26).

We are already sons of God. Yet we wait for "the adoption," that is, for the full state and glory of the position, which will be reached when our bodies are redeemed at the coming of the Lord. We have been saved *in* hope (not, *by* hope) and are consequently put in the position of patient waiting for the promised glory. Saved are we in expectancy of glorious things to come, yet we have the Firstfruits in the Spirit who has been given to us. The firstfruits were offered up in Israel as the pledge and foretaste of the coming harvest (see, Lev. xxiii. 10, 17, 20), so in the Firstfruits of the Spirit we have the pledge and foretaste of the redeemed body and the glory that is ahead.

Also the Spirit helps our infirmities. This word helps us to see that a clear distinction exists between infirmities and sins, for the Spirit never helps our sins. Infirmity is weakness and limitation, both mental and physical, and therefore if unassisted we may very easily fall victims, ensnared by sin.

The help of the Spirit is that we may be strengthened and delivered.

Then again, such is our weakness and limitation that very frequently we find ourselves in circumstances where we simply do not know what to pray for. Then the Spirit indwelling us takes up the role of Intercessor, and utters His voice even in our groanings which baffle utterance. God, who searches all hearts, knows what is the mind and desire of the Spirit, for all His desires and intercessions are perfectly according to the mind of God, whatever our desires might be. God hears according to the Spirit's desires, and not according to ours, and we may well be very thankful that this is so.

We must not miss the connection between verses 26 and 28, though it is not very clear in our version. It is, "We do *not* know what we should pray for as we ought . . . but we *do* know that all things work together for good to them that love God." This thing and that thing may appear to work evil, but together they work for our spiritual good. This must be so, inasmuch as the Spirit indwells us, helping our weaknesses and interceding in our perplexities; and also in the light of the fact that God has taken us up according to His purpose, which nothing can thwart.

This brings us to the third thing: the purpose of God, which secures the glory.

Two verses cover the whole statement; its exceeding brevity only enhancing its force.

There are five links in the golden chain of divine purpose. The first is foreknowledge, which is rooted in the very omniscience of God—rooted therefore in eternity. Next comes predestination: an act of the divine Mind, which destined those whom He foreknew to a certain glorious place long before they existed in time. From other scriptures we know that this predestination took place before the foundation of the world.

But predestination was followed by the effectual call which reached us in the Gospel. Here we come down to time, to the moments in our varied histories when we believed. The next step practically coincided in point of time with this; for we were justified, and not only called, when we believed. Lastly “whom He justified them He also glorified.” Here our golden chain, having dipped down from eternity into time, loses itself again in eternity.

Yet, as you will notice, it says, “glorified”—the past tense and not the future. That is because, when we view things from the standpoint of divine purpose, we are carried outside all time questions, and have to learn to look at things as God looks at them. He “callesh those things which be not as though they were.” (iv. 17). He chooses,

“ things which are not.” (1 Cor. i. 28). Things, which are not to us, exist for Him. We are glorified in the purpose of God. The thing is as good as done, for His purpose is never violated by any adverse power.

See then the point at which we have arrived. In the Gospel God has declared Himself as for us in the wonders of His justifying grace. This came before us up to the close of chapter v. Then the enquiry was made as to what should be our response to such grace; and we have discovered that though we have no power in ourselves to make a suitable response, there is power for it, since we are set in Christ and indwelt by the Spirit of God. We are set free from the old bondage that we may fulfil the will of God. Moreover we have seen how many-sided are the capacities which the Spirit fills as indwelling us. He is “ Law,” “ Life,” “ Leader,” “ Witness,” “ Firstfruits,” “ Helper,” “ Intercessor.” And then again, we find ourselves in the embrace of the purpose of God, which culminates in glory—a purpose that nothing can frustrate.

No wonder the Apostle returns to his question, as to what *we* shall say, with all these things before him! What can be said but words that breathe the spirit of exultation? The question occurs in verse 31, and from thence to the end of the chapter the answer is given in a series of questions and answers, ejaculated with

that rapidity which betokens a burning and triumphant heart. These verses lend themselves not so much to exposition as to meditation. We will just notice a few of the more salient points.

God is for us! Fallen man instinctively thinks of God as being against him. It is far otherwise, as the Gospel proves. His heart is *toward* all men, and He is actively and eternally *for* all who believe. This effectually silences every foe. No one can be effectively against us, however much they would like to be.

The gift of the Son carries with it every lesser gift that we can hold with Him. Notice, in verse 32, the word "freely," and also "with Him." Do we want anything which we cannot have with Him? In our folly or haste we may sometimes want such things. On quiet reflection however we would not have for one moment what would entail separation from Him.

God is our Justifier, not man. In the presence of this no one will succeed in laying so much as one thing to our charge. Even among men, when once the judge has cleared the prisoner it is practically libel to bring the charge against him.

If no charge can be brought there is no fear of condemnation. But if in any way that could be in question there is a perfect answer in Christ, once dead but

now risen, and at the seat of power as an Intercessor on our behalf. Notice that this chapter presents a twofold intercession: Christ at the right hand of God, and the Spirit in the saints below. (vv. 26, 34.)

Could we have a more perfect expression of love, the personal love of Christ, than we have had? We could not. Yet the question may arise—so timorous and unbelieving are our hearts—May not some thing arise, some force appear, which will separate us from that love? Well, let us search and see. Let us mentally ransack the universe in our search.

In this world, which we know so well, there is a whole range of adverse powers. Some of them are exerted directly by evil men, such as persecution or the sword. Others of them are more indirect results of sin in the government of God, such as distress, famine, nakedness or peril. Will any of these things seen and felt, separate us from Christ's love? Not for one moment! Again and again has a timorous convert been assailed by brutal men, who have said in effect, "We'll knock these notions *out* of you." Again and again has the effect of their persecution simply been to knock the truth securely *in*. He has not only won in the conflict but come out of it an immense gainer, and so more than conqueror. By these very things he has been rooted in the love of Christ.

But there is an unseen world—a whole range of things of which our knowledge is very small. Ills, that we know not of, always take on a more fearsome aspect than ill<sup>s</sup> that we know and understand. There are the mysteries of death as well as of life. There are powers of an angelic or spiritual order. There are things that may lie in distant ages or reaches of space that we may yet have to traverse, or creatures that as yet we have not known. What about these?

The answer is that none of these shall for one moment separate us from the love of God. That love rests on us in Christ Jesus our Lord. He is the worthy and all-glorious Object of that love, and we are in it because connected with Him. The love reached us in Him, and we, as now in Him, stand abidingly in that love. If Christ can be removed out of the embrace of that love, we can be. If He cannot be, neither can we. Once grasp that great fact and Paul's persuasion becomes our persuasion. Nothing can separate us, for which eternal praise be to our God!

Our chapter, then, which began with, "*No condemnation*," ends with, "*No separation*." And in between we discover ourselves to be taken up according to the purpose of God, in which there can be *no violation*.

F. B. HOLE.

## “IN THY MAJESTY.”

ONCE, as we read in the Gospels, the Lord Jesus entered into Jerusalem “riding on an ass, and on a colt the foal of an ass.” He came as the Son of David to take His inheritance had it been ready for Him. Alas! it was not ready and when He beheld the city He wept over it, saying, “If thou hadst known, even thou at least, in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes” (Luke xix. 42).

Once again He will come, and this time from heaven, riding on a white horse, King of kings and Lord of lords, to judge and make war in righteousness.

At His first coming He had been the meek and lowly One, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Nevertheless, He had passed through the world as a Victor, but not in such conquests as men boast of. He had met and defeated Satan, not by putting forth His power as He could have done, but as the dependent One, using

the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God. All along the way which led Him to the cross of shame it was,

"By weakness and defeat,  
He won the meed and crown,  
Trode all our foes beneath His feet,  
By being trodden down."

This was a new kind of victory—the victory of the defeated. It seems too wonderful for words; here in the place of man's disobedience and distrust of God, here where the enemy had sown these bitter seeds in the heart of every man, the Lord Jesus, in the most terrible circumstances possible, had gone through all with never a shadow of distrust, never a flaw in His perfect obedience. "In His humiliation, His judgment was taken away, and who shall declare His generation? for His life is taken from the earth" (Acts viii. 33).

In His death on the cross, as made sin for us, the Lord Jesus was alone, none could be with Him or follow Him there, but, in resurrection and ascended on high, He has given the victory unto death to many of His saints, enabling them to lay down their lives most gladly for Him. And still He makes His people sharers in His victory, teaching them the same unfaltering trust in God, working in them that they may be here to do the will of God, and that they also may

be victorious against all the power of the enemy, even as the apostle Paul wrote, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us" (Rom. viii. 37).

We love to trace the pathway of the Lord; from the manger at Bethlehem to the cross of Calvary every detail was perfection. He could say, "I do always those things that please Him." He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. We can never dwell too much nor too deeply on these words and ways of the Lord. No life-time, nor any number of life-times would be long enough to praise Him adequately; eternal days will surely mean eternal praise. But one wonders if the precious truth connected with His riding on the white horse has its due place in our hearts. He is now, and ever shall be, the highly exalted One, He shall yet come forth as the mighty Conqueror, the Prince of the kings of the earth. We read in Psalm xlv. "In Thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and Thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things," and again, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of Thy kingdom is a right sceptre." Again, "He must reign until He hath put all enemies under His feet" (1 Cor. xv. 25). In the scene in which He was despised and rejected it shall be manifest that all things in heaven and earth are subdued under Him.

Can you picture Zechariah writing those words concerning the King coming to Jerusalem (ix. 9), five hundred years before, and wondering of whom they spake? Or the Psalmist earlier still, writing of His sorrow and of His glory, and "searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" (1 Pet. i. 11)?

Can you picture the earnest interest of the four Evangelists as they all told the story (Matt. xxi. 1-9 ; Mark xi. 1-9 ; Luke xix. 29-38 ; John xii. 12-15), each one giving some detail peculiar to himself? or the joy with which John would depict that scene of triumph in Revelation xix. 11-16?

It is well for us to remember the greatness of our Lord and Saviour. He has a Name which is above every name, and the throne and sceptre of the universe are His. Oh! that we may have better thoughts of Him. He endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God, from henceforth expecting till His enemies are made His footstool. He is coming again, no longer the lowly Rider on the ass's colt, but the mighty Conqueror on the white horse—His eyes as a flame of fire, and on His head many crowns, with the white-robed armies of heaven following in His train.

“ Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus.”

Perhaps there may be a reader of these pages who, like the dumb creatures of which we have read, is standing, as Mark tells us, “ tied by the door, without, in a place where two ways met.”

TIED—in bondage to sin and Satan,

AT THE DOOR—so near to the entrance into blessing,

WITHOUT—having no place in the City of God, no part in the communion of saints,

IN A PLACE WHERE TWO WAYS MET—even now at the parting of the ways, one leading to eternal life, eternal light, eternal love, the other leading to the blackness of darkness for ever.

With all the urgency of which we are capable we beseech you to come at once to the Saviour, who can set you free, and set your feet in “ the path of life,” in the power and gladness of His victory, so that you may henceforth yield yourself wholly to Him and to His most blessed service. It is no mean thing to be a Christian, but rather the greatest honour that could be put on anyone. All earthly titles fade into insignificance and are as nothing compared to this.

The Lord grant to writer and reader that this name may be more truly descriptive of us until He come.

## “LET NOT YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED.”

(*From notes of addresses.*)

THERE were three periods in the life of our Lord Jesus, as recorded in the Scriptures, when He was troubled. In the upper chamber before He suffered He turned to His disciples and said unto them. “Let not *your* heart be troubled.”

The three occasions when He was troubled are in themselves significant—Death is the great troubler.

(1) *In the presence of death.* John xi. This He could feel as none other. How it tarnished God’s fair creation as well as filled it with sorrow. As He witnessed the sorrow of those who were suffering through the inroads of death it says, “He groaned in the spirit and *was troubled.*” How sweet it is to hear Him turn to us in tender love and compassion and say to us in the presence of death and sorrow—Let not *your* heart be troubled. I have removed from death its sting and from the grave its victory. “I am the resurrection” and shortly I will triumph *openly* in that I will break the bands of death.

(2) *In the presence of Judgment.* In John xii, His spirit touched Gethsemane before He actually reached it. This time it

is death, not in its outward effect on others, but death as God's judgment, in its relation to Him who was so soon to enter it. In the bitterness of that moment He could say, “Father save me from this hour.” To us in view of these solemn realities He can turn and say as the result of His work, “Let not *your* heart be troubled.” He has known that trouble in order to lift it out of our hearts.

(3) *In the presence of apostasy.* John xiii. He had before Him a sample and anticipation of the Man of Sin—the Lawless one—in Judas. A man he was, that had companied with Christ for three and a half years, professed to be a disciple and had wrought miracles in His name, and then at the finish deliberately gave Him up, betraying Him into the hands of His enemies. When the Lord announced this fact, and in view of it, it is said, “He was troubled in spirit”—and well He might be at the incorrigible and innate wickedness of man's heart. The presence of perfect goodness, even when shown in the Son of God Himself become man, only brought out implacable hatred. But soon after, and in the light of all He had said of His own trouble and its cause, He can say, “Let not *your* heart be troubled.”

There will be no giving you up! What a contrast is to be found in this John xiii. Here is Judas prepared to turn His back on his Master and betray Him, and Christ on

the other hand borne witness to by the Spirit as One who, "having loved His own which were in the world *He loved them unto the end.*" We may have to learn our innate badness in horrible ways, and wonder at love being shown at *any time* to such unloveable creatures, but to find that His love is a love that *will not let us go*—no break down or failure in Him—this is what overwhelms us.

In John xiv. the Lord is seen in the guest-chamber in Jerusalem on that night of nights—the night in which He was betrayed. Surrounding Him were eleven men whose hearts were filled with trouble, as He said, "Sorrow hath filled your hearts." Let us think ourselves back into their circumstances and try to gauge what their feelings must have been.

They had followed the One then speaking as the Messiah of Israel, who, they thought, might at any time by one master-stroke overthrow the power of Rome and assume the reins of government as God's anointed King. Now they are told this is not to be—He, as the nobleman in the parable, was to go into a far country and receive a kingdom and return.

The moment had arrived when in no parabolic figure, but in plain unvarnished fact, He told them death was coming in upon that circle. He was to leave them and all their hopes were not to be realized for the moment.

When grief surcharges the heart there is not much solace in merely being told not to weep. Can you hold out some prospect of the removal of all that causes the sorrow? In John xiv. 1-3 He ministers the solace. He was going to His Father's house ; He would prepare a place for them there, and presently He would come again and receive them to Himself, so that they should be where He is.

There was no word of the Kingdom in all this, and further not one word of Old Testament Scriptures could be pointed to for their faith to lay hold of. They had His word for it, *and only that*, as ground for the hope that it would ever be realized. He was the divine Son and could speak with authority. God had promised and He had performed, not perhaps in the way they anticipated, but every word of God would stand, and now His word would stand. This is how He comforted them.

(1) *He was a divine Person.* “Ye believe in God, *believe also in Me.*” He was going it is true beyond the sphere of sight and sense but He would be none the less what He always was, and He desired that He might be the Object of their faith even there—as God was whom they had not seen.—“Believe also in me.”

(2) *He was going to a new place.* He spoke not to them of Israel's kingdom on

earth, but lifted their hearts away from earth to the home of divine love in the presence of the Father in heaven. A kingdom would speak of glory and display, but here is a scene that is characterized by divine affections and holy intimacy. A place *there* should be prepared for them. The comfort to them should be so much greater as heaven is above the earth.

(3) *He set before them the brightest prospect.* Was the question rising in their minds—How can these things be? He told them, "*I will come again and receive you unto Myself.*" There was to be a glad reunion in that scene where there will be no more parting. They had had *Him* in the place where they were, and in circumstance of sorrow and death this had been their joy. The first breathings of this link being snapped had filled them with sorrow. Now they were to be in the place where links would be re-united and where such sorrow could never enter.

All this was to be as balm for their troubled heart, but we can see it would at the same time be a great test to their faith and affection. The sorrowing ones on the Emmaus road as recorded in Luke xxiv, evidently had not risen to it.

HAVE WE ?

ART CUTTING.

## THE UNEQUAL YOKE IN MARRIAGE.

**O**F all the unequal yokes that the believer can contract that of marriage is the most serious. Other partnerships may be dissolved by mutual consent, but marriage once embarked upon can only rightly be dissolved by the death of one of the contracting parties.

There are certain things we do not need to pray about. If a young man sets his affections on an unbelieving young woman there is no need to ask the Lord if it is His will that the marriage partnership should be contracted. The Scriptures plainly forbid it. "Only in the Lord" (1 Corinthians vii. 39), is the plain injunction of Scripture. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (2 Corinthians vi. 14), is equally clear and emphatic.

In such a serious matter the Lord would not draw out the affections of a believer to an unbeliever.

There are instances in Scripture of the folly of a believer marrying an unbeliever. Solomon married an Egyptian princess. We read, "Solomon brought up the daughter of Pharaoh out of the city of David unto the house that he had built for her: for he said, My wife shall not dwell in the house of

David king of Israel, because the places are holy, whereunto the ark of the Lord hath come" (2 Chronicles viii. 11).

There we have set before us most vividly the folly of the alliance. In the most sacred part of his life she had no part. The wife of his bosom, the companion of special and peculiar intimacy, could not set foot in the holy places of the Lord. Why was that? She was not *holy*. What an alliance! There was no affinity in matters of the highest importance.

What a tragedy is the unequal yoke in marriage! One partner, to love the Lord. The other, to love the world. One, to walk in the narrow path to life. The other, to travel on the broad road to destruction. Well may the Scriptures ask the questions, "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?" that is, "with an unbeliever" (2 Corinthians vi. 14, 15).

But says some young person, "I feel sure my influence will help my partner to be a Christian." Is that so? Does it work that way? What happened to Solomon? Did he gain over his Egyptian wife? We read, "But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of

Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites" (1 Kings xi. 1).

He went from bad to worse. His wives influenced him rather than his influencing them. What a contrast to the day when he dedicated the wonderful temple, when the fire of the Lord descended and consumed the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the house so that the priests could not stand by reason of it. In his old age "his wives turned his heart after other gods."

God acted in judgment as He must ever do when the believer knowingly infringes Scripture. The kingdom was to be rent from him and given to his servant. The execution of this judgment was delayed, not for Solomon's sake but for that of his father David.

What of Solomon's son, his successor on the throne? The unequal yoke is not only the question of marriage, serious as that is, but there is the question of a family. In marriage this is generally looked forward to. "Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is His reward" (Psalm cxxvii. 3). Marriage sets in train a good deal that passes beyond our control, and may be bearing fruit generations after we have passed out of this world.

It is said of King Rehoboam, "And his mother's name was Naamah, an Ammonitess. And he did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the Lord" (2 Chronicles xii. 13, 14). He refused the advice of the old men of wisdom, took the counsel of the foolish young men, answered like a blind fool with a mad heart, and lost ten tribes out of twelve. Solomon, the wisest of men, instead of obeying the clear instructions of Scripture, leaned on his own understanding, wrecked his life, and broke up his kingdom, which will never be united till Christ comes to reign. Thus the consequences of his sin comes out in the history of his son to whom he gave a heathen mother. What else could we expect but catastrophe!

What heartaches could be told of these unholy alliances. A Christian young woman was being lovingly warned by a godly minister of the sinfulness of the unequal yoke. He said to her, "Jane, if you marry an unbeliever, you will sup sorrow with a spoon." After having been married for years, with several children, forsaken and abandoned by her godless husband, in dire need, she reminded him of his warning, and added in bitterness, "Sir, you told me that I should sup sorrow with a spoon; I've drunk it in bucketsful." What a warning!

But the plain instruction of Scripture should suffice.

A. J. POLLOCK.

## THE SECRET OF A HAPPY, USEFUL LIFE.

“**Y**E are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God” (Col. iii. 3).

“So also ye, reckon yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus” (Rom. vi. 11. N. Tr.)

“Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body” (2 Cor. iv. 10).

These three Scriptures have been suggested as giving the secret of victory over the power of sin within and around, and of a happy, useful life of service for our Lord.

In the first we find the fact stated. In the sight of God the believer *has died with Christ*. In His death not only the sins of the believer have been blotted out but the believer himself, as to what he was in Adam fallen, has been brought to an end in judgment. As another has said, “When Christ went to the cross the Christian went also.” This fact is to be received in all simplicity. It presents the matter as it is seen by God and is stated for faith to receive and act upon. It is not a matter of feeling. No one could feel dead. No, it is God’s view in grace, and we are called to see ourselves as He sees us.

In the second passage the exhortation comes to believers to reckon as God reckons. And again it is not a matter of feeling but of faith counting, as led by the Spirit of God, that as Christ has died unto the sin with which He came into contact on our behalf, and lives again free of it, so the believer is to reckon himself to be. "Dead indeed unto sin," no longer a slave to obey its behests; but "Alive unto God in Christ Jesus" and so henceforth free to do His will.

In the third portion it is the practical carrying out of the truth which is spoken of by the Apostle. He had seen himself as having died with Christ when Christ died upon the cross. Faith had laid hold of it at, or since, his conversion on the way to Damascus. And now day by day the truth was applied to his whole course in order that nothing of self might be displayed but only the life of Christ shine out.

A beautiful incident is told of one who knew and valued the truths spoken of and who sought to carry them out in his life, following in the Apostle's steps.

G. V. Wigram was journeying from Australia to New Zealand in his happy service of carrying the gospel, and in ministering to the children of God. With a fellow-Christian, the captain of the ship, he had just left the vessel, when he suddenly re-

membered that he had left his Greek New Testament under the pillow in his berth. The captain went back for the book and asked the officer in charge if the volume had been found. The officer replied that it had, and added "There never has been a man on board like him."

"Why? Did he have anything to say?"

"Not much," he replied, "but he was just like Jesus."

The life of Jesus was being manifested in his body.

So should it be with every Christian, and so it will be with those who keep near to Christ in communion with Him and walk in the power of the Holy Spirit day by day, refusing to allow the flesh in any of its forms, and sowing to the Spirit by prayer and meditation day and night.

INGLIS FLEMING.

The world's religion is like Jericho's water, "naught" and bitter. Consequently, they measure it like bitter medicine. They do not measure the pure sparkling water, but they measure their camomile and quinine, and are careful not to take an overdose.

So the world measures its religion. The service must be abbreviated, the chapter must be short, the sermon not to exceed ten minutes.

On the other hand, the Gospel gushes forth as the very fountain of the water of life.

## GLORY AND TRIBULATIONS.

**A**S we read the two opening verses of Romans v. we seem to march forward to a climax. Then as we read verse 3 we appear to drop downwards to an anti-climax. As we finish verse 2 our heads seem to touch the clouds of glory. As we open verse 3 our feet come to earth amidst the mire of tribulation.

But is the transition as great as it appears to be on the surface? We think not. There is, as a matter of fact, a very intimate connection between tribulations and glory: the one is preparatory to the other.

Paul glorified in tribulation because he well knew what it was designed to effect. It works wonders in the characters of Christians. It is the starting point whence a whole sequence of good things proceeds. The sequence is:—tribulations, patience, experience, hope, love. The patient, the experienced, the hopeful, the loving Christian is the one who has tasted tribulation, and gone through it with God.

God commends His love toward us in the death of the Saviour. His love shines upon us just as the sun shines down from heaven. We need to have room made in our hearts for the in-shining of His love, and this tribulation accomplishes. Only as His love is shed abroad in our hearts can it shine out through us to others.

## OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

*(Romans ix. 1.—x. 21.)*

Owing to the length of this epistle we have made our remarks briefer and more condensed than usual. It will therefore be more than ever necessary to refer to the Scripture itself as you read this article.

**C**HAPTER ix. opens another section of the Epistle, a very clearly defined one. In chapters i.—viii. the apostle had unfolded his Gospel, in which all distinction between Jew and Gentile is seen to be non-existent. He knew however that many might regard his teaching as indicating that he had no love for his nation and no regard for God's pledged word relating to them. Consequently we now have three dispensational chapters in which the mystery of God's ways concerning Israel are explained to us.

In the first three verses of chapter ix. Paul declares his deep love for his people. His affection for them was akin to that of Moses, who prayed, "Blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book" (Exod. xxxii. 32). Then in verses 4 and 5 he recounts the great privileges which had been accorded to them. Last of these, but not least, there sprang out of them the Christ, whose Deity he plainly states.

How then came it that Israel was in so sorry a plight? Had the Word of God failed? Not for one moment; and the first great fact brought forward to explain

the situation is that of the *sovereignty* of God.

Now Israel were the last people in the world who could afford to quarrel with the divine sovereignty, for again and again it had been exercised in their favour. This point comes very clearly before us up to verse 16. God made a sovereign choice in regard to the sons of both Abraham and Isaac. He chose Isaac and Jacob, and set aside Ishmael and Esau. If any wished to object to God making a choice, they would have to obliterate all distinction between themselves and both Ishmaelites and Edomites. This they would not contemplate for one moment. Well then, God was only continuing to do as He had already done, and hence not all who were of Israel by natural descent were the true Israel of God.

Moreover when Israel made the golden calf in the wilderness they would have been blotted out in judgment had the law had its way. Instead God fell back upon His sovereign mercy, according to words from Exodus xxxiii. 19, quoted here in verse 15. This is a third case of God exercising His sovereignty in their favour, even as verse 17 supplies us with an example of God exercising His sovereignty against Pharaoh.

The plain facts are these :—(1) God has a will. (2) He exercises it as He pleases. (3) No one can successfully resist it. (4)

If challenged, the rightness of His will can always be demonstrated when the end is reached. God is like the potter and man is like the clay.

How often God's will is challenged ! How much reasoning has taken place on the facts stated in our chapter ! How slow we are to admit that God has a right to do as He likes, that in fact He is the only one that has the right, inasmuch as He alone is perfect in foreknowledge, wisdom, righteousness and love. Things may often appear inexplicable to us, but then that is because we are imperfect.

Verse 13 has given rise to difficulty. - But that statement is quoted from the book of Malachi ; words written long after both men had fully shown what was in them ; whereas verse 13 records what was said before their birth. Others have objected to God's words to Pharaoh as quoted in verse 17. The answer to such objections lies in our chapter, verses 21 to 23. Men pit themselves against God, hardening their hearts against Him, and in result God makes a signal example of them. He has a right so to do ; while others become vessels of mercy, whom beforehand He prepares for glory.

Consequently if any object to what God is doing to-day, in calling out by the Gospel an elect people both from Jews and Gentiles, the answer simply is, that God is only doing

again in our days what He has done in the past. Moreover the prophets had anticipated that He would act thus. Both Moses and Isaiah had foretold that only a remnant of Israel should be saved, and that a people formerly not beloved would be called into favour. This is stated in verses 25 to 29.

The matter is briefly summed up for us in the closing verses. Israel stumbled at that stumblingstone, which was Christ. Further they misused the law, treating it as a ladder by which they might climb into righteousness, instead of a plumb-line by which all their supposed righteousness might be tested. Israel had *missed* righteousness by *law*, and Gentiles had *reached* righteousness by faith.

This leads the Apostle, in the early part of chapter x. to contrast the righteousness of the law with that of faith, and once more he expresses his fervent love and desire towards his people. His prayer for them was for their salvation. Very clear proof this, that they were not saved. Religion they had, zeal they had, the law they had, but they were not saved. Wrongly assuming that they were to establish their own righteousness by law-keeping they went about to do it, and miserably failed. And the very zeal with which they went about it blinded them to the fact that Christ was the end of the law, and that God's righteousness was available for them *in Him*.

How much better it is to have God's righteousness than our own, for ours at the best would be only human. Every one that believes has Christ for righteousness, as verse 4 tells us. And Christ is "the end of the law." The word *end* is used here, we believe, just as it is in 2 Corinthians iii. 13., signifying the *object in view*. The law was really given in view of Christ. It paved the way for Him. If only Israel had been able to stedfastly look to the end of the law they would have seen Christ. It is quite true of course that Christ being come, all thought of righteousness being reached by law came to a conclusion. But that is not the primary meaning of verse 4.

Next, we have a striking contrast drawn between the righteousness of law and the righteousness of faith. The former demands the works that are in keeping with its requirements and prohibitions. Words will not do, works must be produced. By those works, if produced, men shall live. Failing to produce them, and to go on producing them, men shall die.

In contrast thereto the righteousness of faith does not demand works at all. It does not demand that we ascend into heaven to bring Christ down, for down He is come. Nor does it demand that we descend, as though to bring Him up from the dead, since from the dead He is risen. In penning these words the Apostle evidently had in his mind

the words of Moses as recorded in Deuteronomy xxx. 11-14. Read that passage and see. You will notice that verse 8 of our chapter, as to the form of it, is suggested by verse 14. The word of the Gospel is sent by God to us. Received by us in faith, it becomes the word of faith to us, entering our hearts and coming out of our mouths.

Of old God brought His commandment very near to Israel that they might do it. He has brought His word even nearer to us in Christ. It is now not a word of what we ought to do, but of what Christ has done, and of what He Himself has done in raising Christ from the dead. On our part the word only demands that we believe with the heart that God has raised Him from the dead, and that we confess Him as Lord with our mouths. When heart and mouth thus go together there is of course reality. Real subjection to Jesus as Lord carries with it salvation.

Notice the distinction that is drawn in verse 10 between righteousness and salvation. The faith of the heart in Christ puts a man into right relations with God—the faith of the *heart*, be it noted, as distinguished from the faith of the *head*, or mere intellectual apprehension. Real conviction of sin produces a heartfelt sense of need, and consequently heartfelt trust in Christ. That heartfelt faith God sees, and He reckons the

man as right with Himself. Now the man goes a step further and confesses Christ publicly, or at least openly, as his Lord. This at once puts Him outside the world system in which the Lord is refused. His links with the world thus being cut, he steps into the blessedness of salvation.

Salvation is a word of very large meaning, as we have before seen. If we confine it in our thoughts to deliverance from the hell that our sins deserve, we miss a good deal of its significance. The moment we believe we are righteous before God, but until we definitely range ourselves under the Lordship of Christ by confessing Him personally as Lord, we do not get free of enslavement to the world, nor can we expect to experience the might of His authority and power on our behalf. How much do we know—each one of us—of a life of happy freedom in subjection to the Lord, and in occupation with His interests?

It is not supposed for one instant, of course, that we are going to believe in Jesus and *not* confess Him as Lord with our mouths. That would be impossible if our faith be the faith of the heart, since it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks. Verse 11 of our chapter makes this point very clear. The believer is *not* ashamed. This is quoted from Isaiah xviii. 16. The same verse is quoted in the last verse of the previous chapter,

chapter, and it is also quoted in 1 Peter ii. 6. The, "make haste," of Isaiah becomes, "ashamed," in Romans, and "confounded," in Peter. A good illustration this of how New Testament quotations enlarge the sense of Old Testament predictions. The one who believed Isaiah's word would never have to flee in panic-stricken haste before the avenging judgment. Neither shall we. But we have also One introduced as Lord, who fills us with confidence and in whom we glory. Who, really knowing Him, would be ashamed to confess Him?

Our salvation, then, lies in calling on the name of the Lord, as is stated so plainly in verses 12 and 13. There is richness of supply and of power in Him, and all is at the disposal of the one who calls upon Him, without any distinction. Here we have the "no difference" of grace, just as in chapter iii. we had the "no difference" of guilt. Jesus is "Lord over all" whether they call upon Him or whether they do not. But the richness of His saving power is only at the disposal of those that call upon Him.

Do we call upon Him? Without a doubt we called upon Him at the hour of our conversion, and salvation we received. But is it the habit of our hearts to call upon Him in every emergency? A daily salvation we need, and a daily salvation is for us as we call upon Him—a salvation from every spiritual danger. The Lord does not

always deliver His saints from physical dangers, threatened by the world without: sometimes He permits them to suffer grievous things, as in the case of Stephen, for instance. But then see how mighty was the spiritual salvation that Stephen enjoyed, even while his persecutors were breaking his bones. He furnishes us with the finest possible illustration of spiritual salvation flowing from the Lord, who is over all.

How important then is the Gospel, in which He is presented as Lord for the submission of faith. Verses 14 and 15 emphasize this. If men are to be saved they must hear the Gospel and God must send it. With Him it all begins. God sends the preacher. The preacher delivers the message. Men hear of Christ and they believe in Him. Then they call upon the Lord and are saved.

But all begins with God. Every true preacher is sent forth by Him, and beautiful are their feet as they go. Paul quotes from Isaiah lii., where the prophet speaks of the coming days, when at last the tidings of deliverance comes to Zion by the advent of the Lord in His glory. Equally beautiful however are the feet of those who carry the tidings of His advent in grace and humiliation, and of all that was accomplished by it for our salvation.

The trouble is that all have not obeyed the Gospel, as Isaiah also indicated. Obedi-

ence is by faith. The word, "report," really occurs thrice in this passage ; for verse 17 more literally rendered is, "So faith then is by a report, but the report by God's word." When the report reaches our ears, backed by the authority of God's word, we believe it. Then it is that we can say like the Queen of Sheba, "It was a true report that I heard."

The report then has gone forth. It had gone forth even in the early days when Paul wrote this epistle. The blessing however was conditioned upon the obedience of faith. Now as a nation Israel had remained unbelieving, and the warning words of the prophets were in process of being fulfilled. In the first verse of the chapter the Apostle had expressed his fervent desire and prayer, which was for their salvation. In the closing verses he sets forth the sad facts of the situation. They were a disobedient and gainsaying people. The word, "gainsaying" means, "contradicting." They continually said, "No" to all that God proposed, and denied all that He asserted.

Yet God had borne with them in long patience, stretching out His hands in entreaty, as it were. Now the moment had come for a change in His ways. Israel had stumbled over Christ as a stumbling-stone, and were for the time being set aside.

## THE REALITY OF THE RESURRECTION.

**I**N the four Gospels it is striking to note the pains the risen Lord took to prove to His disciples that He was indeed risen from the dead. It was a tremendous thing to believe. It was against the ordinary course of things. "Death reigned" (Rom. v. 14). This describes what we know obtained in this world as the fruit of sin, apart from the grace of God.

Take the two disciples going to Emmaus. No wonder they were bewildered and sad. They trusted that the Lord was He who should have redeemed Israel. Instead of wielding the flaming sword of deliverance He had died on the cross, as men would judge, defeated. Three days had gone by since His death.

And sadness would have been their portion for ever if our Lord had remained in the grave. Nothing but His resurrection could turn their sadness into gladness and exultation and triumph. Made known to them in the breaking of bread, everything

was changed. Faith, which had sunk below zero, revived. The apostles saw Him again and again. Peter saw Him. James saw Him. Five hundred brethren saw Him at one time.

The Lord might have ascended to glory immediately on His resurrection, but tarried forty days on earth, that He might prove beyond a doubt the fact of His glorious resurrection.

His resurrection was unlike anything else. The Lord raised Lazarus, brought back to life the widow's son of Nain and the centurion's daughter. There was a visible Agent in this case, even the Lord of life.

But in His own case there was no visible agent. No eye saw Him rise. *GOD* raised Him from the dead, is reiterated again and again in the Acts of the Apostles.

And if the four Gospels declare with no uncertain voice the FACT of Christ's resurrection, the Acts of the Apostles give us the TESTIMONY of the fact. One verse covers this, "With great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all." (Acts iv. 33.) And if the Acts of the Apostles give us the TESTIMONY to His resurrection; the Epistles give us the TEACHING concerning it.

It lies at the very foundation of the Gospel. "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." (1 Corinthians xv. 17.)

Again righteousness is imputed to the believer, "if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead." (Romans iv. 24.)

There is a general belief in the resurrection of Christ, which in reality is not faith at all. It is what we might call an intellectual belief, a belief in its historicity, just as we believe the history concerning Julius Caesar or Napoleon. It is a belief of such a shallow unthinking nature that the *purport* of the resurrection is not grasped. I tackled a sceptic in the train and pressed upon him the truth of the resurrection of our Lord. He had wit enough to see the point was strategic. He replied with a sort of shudder, "Well, if you can prove the resurrection of Christ I am bound to be some sort of a Christian."

Romans x. 9, emphasises believing with the *heart*. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe *in thine* HEART that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." We believe in Julius Caesar and Napoleon, but we do not need to confess with our mouths that their lives have any relation to us. Nor is there any need to urge our belief concerning them should be with the heart.

Why need we then confess Jesus as Lord with our mouth, and believe *in our heart* that God raised Him from the dead? The answer is simple yet profound and of deepest and eternal import to us. Why should God raise our Lord from the dead? He has not raised Paul or Peter or Lydia or Phebe. Why raise Christ? The answer is, He "was delivered for our offences, *and was raised again for our justification.*" (Romans iv. 25). He did not die *for Himself*, He died an atoning death, and His resurrection is a proof of its completeness and victory.

And it is *heart* belief in this, the real acceptance of Christ as our Saviour, that links us up with Christ in glory, that saves us, that brings to us the full free forgiveness of sins.

There is an interesting incident in the life of the late Dr. R. W. Dale of Birmingham, a true servant of Christ, a man of fine intellect and simple faith. One day in his study the realization that Jesus was actually alive came upon Him with a force and conviction he had never experienced before. The fact that the Lord Jesus was actually alive just as much as when He convinced the apostles that He was not a phantom or a spirit; as much alive as when He bade Thomas put his fingers into the nail prints, and thrust his hand into his side, and be not faithless, but believing; just as much alive to-day as when Stephen was

martyred and Paul converted; an Unseen Presence but alive, who says to us, as He once said to John, "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen." (Revelation i. 18). It revolutionized Dr. Dale. No wonder he preached with a new-found vigour and joy for the rest of his days.

The resurrection of the Lord Jesus is a great reality. It has lifted the black clouds of sin and judgment, and unrolled before us a cloudless sky of eternal glory, blessed be God's name for ever, all centred in a glorious living Person, our Lord Jesus Christ.

A. J. POLLOCK.

### "PLAY THE MAN."

**S**UCH is the striking reading of 1 Corinthians xvi. 13, as given by that eminent scholar and faithful servant of the Lord :—the late Mr. William Kelly. Here it is :—"Watch, stand in the faith, *play the man*, be strong." While verse 14 adds the significant words :—"Let all your doings be in love."

The two pungent sentences are interesting, (i), because of the Epistle in which they are found, and, (ii), because of the place in that Epistle in which they occur.

The expression is constantly in use and its meaning is easily understood. The boy at school, the student at College, the apprentice at work, the young fellow launching out on a professional, industrial or commercial career is exhorted to “*play the man!*”

It is sometimes said to a person who may appear to be lacking in courage; or whose conduct may be somewhat shady; or whose behaviour may not be up to the generally accepted standard of life:—“Now—*play the man!*”

It would seem that the believers at Corinth had not been doing this. In the earlier chapters of this epistle there was much that the inspired writer had to correct and rebuke. Their contentions and their glorying in the flesh: chapter i. Their infantile condition and spiritual poverty: chapter iii. Their worldly ambition: chapter iv. Their disregard of personal purity: chapter v, vi. Their lack of consideration for others: chapter viii. Their want of intelligence as to the precious truth of the Assembly: chapters x, xi, xiv. Their allowance of those amongst them who taught bad doctrine: chapter xv. A formidable, an appalling indictment. In all these things judged by divine righteousness, as well as by the code of common morality, they had failed miserably to “*play the man.*” Now, as he closed his letter, the writing of which must have

caused him pain, and yet we thank God for the wonderful truth embodied therein, he sought to encourage their hearts.

He urged them to "*watch!*" A needful injunction in that day and a salutary word in this day. How we need to *watch*. To watch our thoughts; our hearts; our words; our ways; our walk; our whole manner of life. We require ever to remember the words:—"Be vigilant, *watch*. Your adversary the devil as a roaring lion walks about seeking whom he may devour. Whom resist, stedfast in faith." (1 Peter v. 8, 9, N. Tr.) We must watch that our practice is not at variance with our profession.

The next exhortation is "*stand* in the faith." The first necessity for the warrior in Ephesians vi. is ability to *stand*. To be enabled to stand in the face of the fiercest opposition is something to be desired. That which secured for Shammah a place in King David's roll of honour was that he knew how to stand. When the Philistines determined to commandeer a patch of lentiles he stood. It appeared a trifling thing for which to contend, and evidently his brethren thought so for they deserted him, but he realized that it belonged to David; he held it for David; "*he stood in the midst of the ground*, and defended it, and slew the Philistines: and *the Lord wrought a great victory*." (2 Samuel xxiii. 11, 12.)

Similarly we are called upon to "*stand in the faith.*" Observe, not stand in faith, though faith is essential for it, but "*stand in the faith.*" "In the midst of the ground." We are to yield not an inch to the enemy ; but, even if forsaken by our fellow believers and, it may be, reproached by them, we are to "*stand in the faith.*" Shammah played the man in his day ; Paul played the man in his day ; he urged the believers in Corinth, who had failed so wretchedly just on this point, to "*play the man*"; and the Holy Spirit calls upon us to-day to "*play the man.*"

Shall we linger a few moments at this point and ask ourselves—are we doing so ? If we keep our lips sealed when we should witness for our Lord before those with whom we have daily to associate ; do we "play the man" ? When we contract an unholy alliance with a person whom we know is not a true believer ; do we "play the man" ? When we join hands with the world from which we profess to have separated ; adopt, or continue, its habits ; follow its pursuits, and seek its pleasures ; do we "play the man" ? When we mix with the religious Societies, out of which we perhaps once thought the Lord had called us to Himself, and join in their activities ; do we "play the man" ? If we succumb to the chiding of those who label us "bigoted," "narrow-minded," "sectarian," etc ; and faint if left apparently alone, as Sham-

mah and Paul were; do we “play the man”? Do we not feel how weak we are, and how we fail just here. To “play the man” suggests our having to contend with open opposition; with subtle tactics; with the world without, the flesh within, and the devil pulling both strings. It also indicates the need of spiritual backbone and determination which will be the outcome of deep personal devotedness to our adorable Lord.

We need to pray, and pray, that, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we may be enabled to “*play the man*” for our Lord Jesus Christ, and for all the marvellous truth that circles around His glorious person. For this we need to

“*Be strong.*”

How frequently are we urged to be strong. When Joshua succeeded Moses he was told over and over again to “*Be strong.*” When Timothy was to follow Paul he received the word “*Be strong.*” Again we turn to Ephesians vi. and hear the call “*Be strong.*” In each case it supposes conflict. If we are to be loyal to our absent and rejected Lord, if we are to maintain that which is due to Him; if we are to “*play the man,*” we must “*be strong,*” Conflict there most certainly will be. In this warfare there is no room for professing Christians of the “jelly-fish” order; nor for “Mr. Facing-

both-ways." The call to-day is for men ; men who will face the foe ; who will " watch " ; who will " stand in the faith " ; who will " play the man," and who will " be strong," not in themselves but " in the Lord " ; not in acrimonious talk but " in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."

This brings us to the closing word, " Let all your doings be in love." In our dealings with our fellow men with whom we have to associate day by day ; in our relations with " all saints " ; in our individual walk ; in our service ; let all our doings be in love. If necessary let us read 1 Corinthians xiii. every morning of our life before we leave our room ; and again at night before we lay down to rest. Let us pray that we may be saturated with the love of that chapter ; that it may permeate every fibre of our being ; that it may control our every thought, and word, and deed. This will make us not careless but watchful ; not weak-kneed but able to stand ; not flabby but manly ; not spineless but strong. In short we will become increasingly like our blessed Lord ; and as with Shammah so with us ; the Lord, not we, *the Lord* will work a great victory. His heart will be comforted, His Name will be glorified ; there will be, unknown to us, fruit that shall be to His praise, and great blessing will be ours.

## JACOB'S DREAM.

*(Genesis xxviii.)*

**T**HIS chapter of Genesis brings before us the first stage in Jacob's flight from Beer-sheba, in the Land of Promise, to Padan-aram in the land of Mesopotamia.

The previous chapter had presented a sorrowful picture of the household of the patriarch Isaac. Failure marks every member of the family. Isaac is seen as a feeble old man, governed by his appetites; Rebekah, plotting behind her husband's back, instructs her son Jacob to wrong his brother and deceive his father. Jacob, listening to his mother's evil advice, deliberately lies to his father, and supplants his brother; and Esau, discovering Jacob's treachery, plots to murder his brother at the first opportune moment.

As a result of all this corruption and deceit, Isaac has to dismiss Jacob from the home; Rebekah loses her favourite son never to see him again; Esau becomes a sorrow to his parents, and Jacob, for twenty years, becomes a wanderer in a strange land, banished from the home of his father and the Land of Promise.

In the first stage of his journey, Jacob lights upon a certain place where he tarries for the night. There we see him a lonely

man with a stone for his pillow, only the sky above him, and darkness closing around him. Yet, strangely enough as we might think, it is in this lonely place, when lying on the stony bed his sin had made, that the Lord meets him. The Lord had nothing to say to him by his father's bedside, in the place of his sinning; but in the dreary spot where his sin had cast him, the Lord draws near, and turns his comfortless bed into a place of correction and consolation.

In spite of Jacob's many failures he was a man of faith, and blessed by God. His failures, indeed, obtain for him only trial and sorrow; his faith obtains for him a good report and a place amongst God's Old Testament worthies (Heb. xi. 9, 21). Nor is it otherwise with the believer to-day. On the one hand, God is not indifferent to our failures, and the fleshly way we may speak and act; for these things we have to suffer under His government. On the other hand, God is not indifferent to what is of Himself in each believer, according to that word in Hebrews vi. 10-12, "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love." We alas! are sometimes over righteous in taking account of one another's failures, and unrighteous in forgetting what is of God in one another.

There are thus two things Jacob has to learn on this memorable occasion. First, for his consolation, he will learn that all

his failures will not alter God's purpose to bless him in sovereign grace. Second, for his correction, he will learn that God's sovereign grace will not stay God's chastening hand on account of his failures. The sovereign grace of the Lord will not set aside the faithful government of the Lord. Jacob's circumstances are not altered; he still has to pursue his lonely way as a wanderer, and spend long years in toil and bondage, in the house of the stranger, as the result of his sin against his father and brother. He has to reap what he has sown. If Jacob deceives his father with the skins of goats, so, in the years to come he will be deceived by his own sons with the blood of a goat. The sovereign grace by which we are blessed, does not alter that memorable law, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. vi. 7).

However, the very sin for which Jacob had to suffer became the occasion of displaying the grace and mercy of God to the sufferer. To make known this grace the Lord appears to him in a dream. Jacob sees a ladder set up on earth whose top reaches the heavens. He sees the angels of God ascending and descending on the ladder. More wonderful still, he sees that, "The Lord stood above it." At the top of the ladder is the Lord of glory, at the bottom of the ladder is a failing, lonely man. Between the Lord at the top and Jacob at the bottom there are heavenly

messengers from the Lord, and heavenly guardians for the saints, ascending and descending.

Then, most wonderful of all, to this feeble failing man below, the Lord of glory reveals Himself in sovereign grace as a Giver.

First, the Lord unconditionally secures the promised Land to Jacob and his heirs. He says, "The land whereon thou liest, *to thee will I give it* and to thy seed."

Second, not only shall Jacob have the promise of the Land, but he shall have the presence of the Lord; not only the the gift but the Giver, for, says the Lord, "*I am with thee.*"

Third, not only would he have the presence of the Lord, but he would have the support of the Lord, for the Lord can say, "*I will keep thee* in all places whither thou goest." If the Lord was with him He would be with him to preserve him.

Fourth, when his wandering days are done the Lord will bring Jacob back to the Land that He has given him, for the Lord says, "*I . . . will bring thee again into this land.*" Jacob's sin may drive him from home; the Lord's grace will bring him home. Says Naomi, after ten years of wandering, "The Lord hath brought me home again." Every sheep He picks up He brings home, and nothing but His home will do for His sheep.

We may wander, we may break down, we may fail most grievously, but at last He brings us home.

Finally, Jacob can depend upon the faithfulness of the Lord to His own word, for the Lord says, "*I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.*" Whatever Jacob may be or do, and whatever we may be or do, He remains the same. Even if we are unfaithful, "He abideth faithful: He cannot deny Himself" (2 Tim. ii. 13.)

HAMILTON SMITH.

## THE RAVEN AND THE DOVE.

**T**HERE were two birds in the Ark, a Raven and a Dove, with two absolutely distinct natures. The raven fed on carrion; the dove fed on cereals. The believer in Jesus, born of God, has got two natures as opposite as those two birds. One is the old nature that feeds on the scrap, the other, the new, which feeds on the "finest of the wheat." Starve the raven and feed the dove! That is the way to make spiritual progress.

You may say, "I want to make progress but something has got me in bondage." The fact is of course you have these two natures, antagonistic to each other, dragging

in opposite directions, and you so act that the raven is flourishing whilst the dove languishes.

A young lady said to me one day, "How is it that I get into such flaring tempers all of a sudden? I go down and confess my sins and I feel I have got forgiveness, but I do it the next day, and do it again, and it is a case of sinning and confessing it all the time, till I am more miserable than I was before I was converted." That kind of thing is the experience of a good many Christians. I said, "Do you read novels?" Well, good ones," she said. "What has that got to do with it?" My reply was to this effect:—John Bunyan tells us in his "Pilgrim's Progress" that in the Interpreter's House, he saw a fire burning against a wall, and one standing by it always throwing water upon it, yet the fire burned hotter. He takes you round to the other side of the wall. There is a man feeding the fire with oil. Now in public you are trying to extinguish the flesh but in secret you minister to the flesh. Sin is in the flesh, and then you are awfully ashamed if it breaks out in public. That's it! But can you expect anything else?

You cannot, if you still continue feeding the raven and starving the dove. Let us rather remember that the death of Christ has put the sentence of death on the old nature, and that He has made us sharers in

His risen life, and given to us His Spirit that we may live out this new life. Let us keep the death sentence where God has put it, reckoning ourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. STARVE THE RAVEN AND FEED THE DOVE!

ART CUTTING.

## OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

(*Romans xi. 1—xii. 21.*)

Owing to the length of this epistle we have made our remarks briefer and more condensed than usual. It will therefore be more than ever necessary to refer to the Scripture itself as you read this article.

**T**HOUGH Israel, as a nation, has been set aside for a time, they have not been cast away for ever. Some Gentiles in the conceit of their hearts thought so when Paul was writing, and not a few think so to-day. But God forbid that it should be so, for they are His people fore-known for a special object, and in that event His object would be defeated. The Apostle immediately cites his own case as proof. Mercy had been shown to him and he was an Israelite, a *sample* of that remnant which God was then calling, and a *pledge* of the ultimate restoration of his nation. God is still to-day calling a remnant just as one was preserved in the days of Elijah.

“I also am an Israelite,” says Paul. In passing let us place against these words that other declaration of Paul made to an

unfriendly and critical audience of his own nation, "I am verily a man which am a Jew." (Acts xxii. 3.) The two statements are worthy of note in view of the widespread propaganda of British-Israelism which rests so largely upon the assumption that "Jew" always means the two tribes, who are utterly rejected; whereas "Israel" means the ten, to whom all the blessings belong, and who are identified by them with the English-speaking peoples. If that assumption be wrong the main part of their theory collapses like a bubble. Paul punctures British-Israelism.

But let us pick up the thread of the argument. When Israel was practically apostate in the days of Ahab, God reserved to Himself no less than seven thousand who were true to Himself at heart, though only Elijah was an outstanding figure in testimony. This was the fruit of His grace, and the same grace still works. The result is "a remnant according to the election of grace" (v. 5). As a nation Israel had despised grace and sought for righteousness by law-keeping, only to miss it and to be blinded (v. 7). Bowing to grace the remnant had been saved.

Verses 8-10 show us how their stumbling and consequent blindness had been anticipated by Old Testament prophets. Verse 11 indicates one great result flowing from it: thereby salvation had been presented

to the Gentiles. The succeeding verses down to 15 contemplate their ultimate national restoration, and its results are strikingly contrasted with the results of their setting aside.

As a result of their stumble the Gospel of grace has been sent forth among the nations and the Gentile world greatly enriched. It has meant "the reconciling of the world;" that is, the world which was left alone and in the dark, while God was concentrating all His dealings upon Israel, has now come up for favourable consideration in the light of the Gospel. The reconciliation spoken of here is not, as in chapter v., something vital and eternal, the fruit of the death of Christ, but something provisional and dispensational, the fruit of Israel's stumble.

To-day Israel is fallen and diminished and broken, and lo! all this has worked out in favour of the Gentiles. What then will be the result of "the receiving of them," of "their fulness?"—that is, of God once more taking them back into favour? A further great accession of blessing in the earth, so great as to be likened to "life from the dead." The main point of the passage, however, is that Israel having been set aside from the exclusive place they once held, the Gentiles are now being visited in blessing, whilst at the same time God is still preserving an election from amongst Israel according to His grace.

This is confirmed and amplified, in verses 16-24, by an illustration concerning an olive tree and grafting. No doubt the olive is specially chosen for the illustration, inasmuch as being the source of oil it is figurative of spiritual fatness, or blessing. Israel once had this place of blessing in the earth in connection with Abraham their ancestor. They forfeited it, as we have seen, and now Gentiles have come into it; as we read, "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ." (Gal. iii. 14.)

This transference is pictured as the breaking off of natural branches from the olive tree, and the grafting in of branches from a wild olive, so that these formerly wild branches now partake of the fatness of the good olive, drawing their supplies from its root. The grafting process suggested is "contrary to nature," as verse 24 points out. It is nothing new however to discover that the processes of grace work on opposite lines to the processes of nature.

It is important for us Gentiles to realize what has happened, and the way in which it has happened. Israel has lost their old position through unbelief, and we hold our new position by faith. So let us beware! If Gentiles do not abide in faith what can they expect but that they too in turn shall be broken off? The grafted-in branches from the wild olive cannot expect better

treatment than the original branches of the tree. Again bear in mind that the point here is not the spiritual blessing of individual believers, but the dispensational change in God's ways, which has put rebellious Israel under His governmental displeasure and brought Gentiles into a place of favour and opportunity in connection with the Gospel.

God's dealings in this matter illustrate the two sides of His character—goodness and severity—as verse 22 makes plain. The severity of God is tremendously discounted, if not denied, in many religious circles today. It exists nevertheless, and those who discount or deny it will have to face it in due season. The natural branches—poor scattered Israel—are going to be grafted in again, and the high-minded Gentile branches broken off. The times of the Gentiles are running to their end.

With verse 25 we drop the figure of the olive tree and resume the main theme of the chapter. The apostle very plainly predicts Israel's blindness is only going to last until the fulness of the Gentiles is come in. Then their eyes will be opened, and Israel as a whole will be saved. This will happen when once more the Lord Jesus returns. The blindness is only "in part," since all along God has been calling out an election from amongst them. When Jesus comes again "all Israel" will be saved:

that is, Israel as a whole, or nationally. It does not mean that every individual Israelite will be, for the Scriptures show that many amongst them will worship anti-christ and perish.

“The fulness of the Gentiles” refers to God’s present work of calling out an election from amongst the Gentile nations also. When that work is complete and the whole “fulness” or “complement” secured, the end will come. God’s present purposes of grace to the nations will be secured, and then He will proceed to secure His purposes in regard to Israel; for He never repents, or changes His mind, regarding His gifts or His calling. Only He will secure those purposes, not on the ground of man’s merit but of His mercy.

The rendering of verse 31 in the New Translation is, “So these also have now not believed in your mercy, in order that they also may be objects of mercy.” The Jews nationally rejected the Gospel just because it was mercy, sent specially to the Gentiles, (Acts xxii. 21, 22, exemplifies this) and eventually they will be profoundly humbled and receive blessing on the same ground as the Gentile dog.

As Paul concluded his survey of God’s dispensational dealings and ways, as He saw mercy ultimately flowing out even to his own countryman, once so hardened and self-righteous, his soul was filled with adoration.

He burst out in the doxology with which the chapter closes. We may call it the doxology of the *wisdom* of God, just as that at the end of Ephesians iii. is the doxology of His *love*, and that in 1 Timothy i. the doxology of His *grace*. The apostle glorifies that wisdom which lies behind all His ways, carrying everything finally to a glorious consummation, wherein is jointly achieved His own glory and the blessing of His creatures.

Thus chapter xi. ends very much as chapter viii. ended. In both we have the purpose of God and His electing mercy. Small wonder then that chapter xii. opens with an appeal based upon the mercies of God. In this way we commence the hortatory and practical section of the epistle. There is only one thing to do in response to the abounding compassion which has reached us in the Gospel—we present our bodies to God as a sacrifice livingly devoted to Him. This is reasonable, or intelligent, service on our part, and acceptable to Him.

In verse 13 of chapter vi. the Apostle had indicated that the way of deliverance from the service of sin was to yield ourselves unto God, and our members as instruments of righteousness unto God. We were to have the thing done, definitely and for ever, as a settled thing. The exhortation here is very similar. Have we each of us had a moment in our histories when, conscious of the abounding mercies of God,

perhaps overwhelmed with them, we have definitely presented our bodies as something livingly devoted to Him? Once each of us held his body as the vehicle wherein his own will would be expressed. Once we each said in effect, "I am the captain of my body and it shall serve my pleasures." Have we now surrendered it to Another, that it may serve His will and be used for His service and glory? We perform no really intelligent service for Him until we do this. We cannot be intelligent in the Gospel without seeing that such a course is the only proper response.

This will of course involve what is enjoined upon us in verse 2. Non-conformity to this world—or age—will mark us, inasmuch as we shall necessarily be conformed to the will of God. But God has His own way of bringing this about. Sometimes we see *conformed* Christians—sadly conformed to this age, and their bodies continually bearing witness to the fact. Sometimes too we see *reformed* Christians, trying with a good deal of laborious effort to imitate Christ and do as He would do. What is set before us here is the *transformed* Christian, the transformation proceeding from the mind within to the body without.

Our verse does not speak of what God has done, or is doing, for us. It speaks of what we are to do. The responsibility

is put upon us. We are not to be fashioned according to this age: we are to be transformed. Both these things, the negative and the positive, are to be worked out day by day. The renewing of our minds, and the transformation effected thereby, are not things accomplished in a moment once and for all, but something to be maintained and increased all through life.

Since the divine instructions to us are that we be transformed by the renewing of our minds, we may well enquire how we may get our minds renewed. The answer is, by getting them formed according to God's thoughts and forsaking our own. And how shall this be? By soaking them in God's Word, which conveys to us God's thoughts. As we read and study the Word in prayerful dependence on the enlightening of the Spirit of God, our very thinking faculties, as well as our way of thinking, become renewed.

Here then is opened up before us the true way of Christian saintliness. We are not set to laboriously fulfil a code of morals, or even to copy the life of Christ. We are brought into contact with that which alters our whole way of *thinking*, and which consequently transforms our whole way of *living*. Thus it is that we may prove the will of God for ourselves, and discover it to be good, acceptable and perfect. What is good before God will be good to us,

since our minds will have been brought into conformity to His.

The very first point where our conformity to the thoughts of God—and consequent non-conformity to the thoughts of the world—will be manifested, is in connection with self-esteem. Naturally each of us thinks no end of himself, for we have not learned to take our true measure before God. The more our minds are renewed the more we see ourselves as God sees us, and know that it is the measure of our *faith* that counts with Him. Faith brings God into our lives, and hence the measure of faith determines our spiritual calibre. We once heard a Christian remark of another, with gravity and a tinge of sadness, “Well, if we could buy that good brother at the price *we put upon him*, and sell him again at the price *he places upon himself*, we should make a *huge profit!*” God help us to learn how to think with great sobriety as to ourselves, realizing that not intellect, not social status, not money resources, not natural gifts but faith is the determining factor.

The fact is, of course, that the greatest and weightiest of us is but a tiny part of one far greater whole. This is emphasized in verses 4 and 5, where for the first time, as far as this epistle is concerned, it is intimated that though saved individually we are not to remain isolated individuals but are brought into a unity—the church of

God. We are one body in Christ, each being a member of that one body. The practical outcome of this fact is that we each have our different functions, just like the members of our natural bodies have, and no one of us can absorb all the functions to himself, nor anything like all of them.

In verses 6-15 we get the practical working out of this. Each has his own gift according to the grace bestowed, so each is to recognize the part he is to play in the scheme. Each ~~to~~ is to take care that what he does, he does in the right way and spirit. The one who prophesies, for instance, is only to do so according to his faith. His knowledge may run beyond his faith but let him take care not to speak beyond his faith. This, if observed, would cut out a lot of unprofitable talking in the gatherings of God's people. So too he that gives is to give with simplicity. He that shows mercy with cheerfulness, so that he does not do a kind act in an unkind way. And so on. The details of these verses hardly need remarks of ours, save that we may point out that "Not slothful in business," is rather, "As to diligent zealotness, not slothful." It has no reference to the keenness with which we pursue our secular callings.

The closing verses of the chapter give more general instructions as to what be-

comes us according to God's mind. Lowliness of mind; openness and honesty; a peaceable spirit; absence of the almost universal spirit of retaliation and vengeance; love, so active as to "retaliate" by kindnesses, and so overcome evil with good; these are pleasing to God, and pleasing to us in so far as our minds are transformed into conformity to His. The figure of "heaping coals of fire" on the head of one's enemy is doubtless suggested by Psalm cxi. 10. The Psalmist prayed for it in keeping with the age of law in which he lived. Our verse shows us the Christian way of doing it.

We may say then that this twelfth chapter gives us the good and acceptable and perfect will of God for us in many of its details. Many of the features mentioned are by no means beloved by the men of the world. Some would please them well enough so long as they get the benefit of them—they will, for instance, quite like the honesty which would lead the Christian to be a prompt payer of accounts, and the absence of vengeance when they perchance take some unrighteous advantage of him. It is only the believer with his mind renewed who can see the beauty of them *all*.

And it is only the believer, whose renewed mind is working out a transformation in his life, that will begin to really practise them.

F. B. HOLE.

## WHO BUILDS ?

“**L**ET us build,” said men of old, “a city and a tower, whose top may reach to heaven ; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered upon the face of the whole earth.” (Gen. xi. 4.)

“*I will build*,” said the Son of God, “My church ; and the gates of hell [*Hades*] shall not prevail against it.” (Matt. xvi. 18).

“*Let us build*,” is doomed to failure, collapse, castastrophe.

“*I will build*,” is indestructible, permanent, eternal in glory for ever.

In studying Scripture you see these two influences at work—God’s work and man’s ; God’s standing invincible and for ever, man’s buildings ever and always erected upon the sand, only to fall and perish.

Alas ! even in saints of God you see the two influences at work. Time tests all religious movements and that adversely. All committed to men’s hands fails and breaks down. Are we then pessimists ? Do we prepare ourselves for defeat and failure ? A thousand times, No ! By very contrast the build-

ing of God stands pre-eminent, rearing its head above the storms.

“ Like some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,  
Swells from the gale and midway leaves the storm,  
Though round its base the rolling clouds be spread,  
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.”

Take the great religious movements of the Old Testament. We have Moses, the law-giver, a sublime figure, filling a unique and magnificent place for God. He is succeeded by Joshua, a fine man, a gallant fighter, but he lacks the power and greatness of Moses. Great as Joshua was, he was not the giant Moses was. Then came the nameless elders of Joshua xxiv. 31, and then you get the awful *debacle* of the Book of Judges, ending up with such terrible stories as the concubine of the Levite of Bethlehem-Judah being cut up into twelve pieces ; and of the way in which the Benjamites captured their wives, the book ending with the description of the awful state of things, “ In those days there was no king in Israel ; every man did that which was right in his own eyes ” (Judges xxi. 25).

Is that all ? Is God defeated ? Certainly the contrast between Moses and Judges xxi. 25 needs no moralizing. Is God defeated ? Nay : Ruth follows Judges. There we get humble and obscure people, in whose hearts God has worked, and who are altogether delightful in their setting. We get Naomi, Ruth, Boaz, the line for David set, and in

truth for "great David's greater Son," the Lord from heaven.

Run down the ages, and we get Malachi writing the last inspired book of the Old Testament, and silence falls for nigh four hundred years. The lamp of faith burns low. There is no national testimony. Things seem as dead as possible. Is God defeated? Nay, Luke lifts the curtain, and we get Joseph, "a just man"; Mary, the honoured mother of our Lord according to the flesh, whose *Magnificat* shows that, humble as she was in distant Nazareth of Galilee, her mind was deeply saturated in and formed by Scripture, for her song is a veritable mosaic of Holy Writ; Elizabeth and Zacharias, Simeon and Anna, and there were others, whose names we know not.

Then the Son of God comes, and by and by Pentecost arrives and the Holy Spirit descends on the believers, and the Church of God is formed on earth.

Then we get Paul in the New Testament answering to Moses in the Old Testament—Paul, the chiefest of the apostles, the chief instrument of inspiration, as witness Ephesians, Colossians, Galatians, Philippians, etc., etc. Then you get Timothy, like-minded with the apostle, yet like Joshua of old in contrast to Moses, not so great a character in contrast to Paul, followed by the "faithful men" (2 Tim. ii. 2), answering to "the

elders that outlived Joshua," and then "greedy wolves" entering in "not sparing the flock."

Is God defeated? Nay. The end will be glorious. The end of the Church's history will be more glorious than its start. The Second Advent will be greater than Pentecost. The Holy Spirit coming down to form the Church, will give place to the Holy Spirit presenting the Bride to the Bridegroom in the cloud.

"*Let us build,*" but they had brick for stone and slime for mortar. A good thing when it all has to perish, as it will one day.

"*I will build,*" yes, and when the summoning shout of the Lord Jesus is heard in the air, such will be its irresistible power that every bit of *His* building, every saint of God, dead or living, from the day of Pentecost, will be caught up—His glorious Church as well as the Old Testament believers—"all that are Christ's at His Coming." All the malevolence of hell will have been spent in vain. Christ's triumph will be secure.

And that Coming draws very nigh. It may be "perhaps to-day." We are on the very threshold of His return. "Surely I come quickly," is His challenge to our affections and our hearts leap up in response and cry, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

A. J. POLLOCK.

## JACOB'S DREAM: ITS NEW TESTAMENT FULFILMENT.

**T**HE writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews alludes to the fine scene recorded in Genesis xxviii. In Hebrews xiii. 5, we read, "He hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." Thus the promise made to Jacob is appropriated to the Christian. So we may rightly conclude that in the story of Genesis xxviii there is a shadowing forth of good things to come. In Genesis God is speaking to one of the fathers in a dream; in the Epistle to the Hebrews we have, no longer the partial revelation of a dream, but, the full revelation in the Person of the Son.

In Genesis Jacob is viewed as a pilgrim about to take a wilderness journey, with exceeding great and precious promises to support him in his journey and bring him home at last. In the Epistle to the Hebrews we have an application of Jacob's dream, giving it a fuller, richer meaning for the Christian. In this Epistle the believer is viewed as a stranger in this world, and as a pilgrim going on to another world (xi. 13: xiii. 14); and there is set before us a glorious Person, and great truths to support us on our journey and bring us to glory at last.

Jacob's dream opens with a vision of the Lord in glory at the top of the ladder: so the Epistle to the Hebrews opens with the great truth that the Lord of glory is "on high." The Son having finished His work on earth has "Sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Throughout the Epistle this great truth is kept prominently before us.

In chapter i. 3, He is presented as having sat down on the right hand of God, because of the glory of His Person: in chapter viii. 1, He is there as our great High Priest: in chapter x. 12, He is there as a proof that His work is finished; and in chapter xii. 2, He is there as having trodden the path of faith and reached the goal.

If, however, the Lord was at the top of Jacob's ladder, at the bottom there was a poor weak failing man, encompassed with infirmities and surrounded by temptations. So in the Epistle to the Hebrews, when we come to the second chapter we find a company of people being brought on their way to glory. They are spoken of as "many sons" who are going to partake of glory but, at present, are partakers of flesh and blood; and, as such, are subject to temptations, compassed about with infirmities, and faced with needs, liable to persecutions, exposed to the contradiction of sinners, and opposed by adversaries (ii. 14-18: iv. 15, 16: x. 33: xii. 3: xiii. 3).

Then, in Jacob's dream, between the Lord at the top, and Jacob at the bottom, there were angels ascending and descending. So in the Epistle to the Hebrews, between the Lord on high brought before us in chapter ii., we read of the angels who are ministering spirits sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation (i. 13, 14.) Here then at the outset of the Epistle we have a remarkable answer to Jacob's dream.

Again we learn, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, the two great lessons that Jacob had to learn at Luz. First we are blessed by the sovereign grace of God that has taken us up, and made us heirs of the glory to which we are being brought through a wilderness scene. Second, the sovereign grace of God that has called us to glory, does not set aside the government of God that deals with us in chastening on the way to glory. (ii. 10: xii. 6).

Moreover, we can see in the Epistle how rich is the provision that God has made for our wilderness journey. We find, indeed, there is in the Epistle, an answer to every blessing that grace secured to Jacob. The first great truth that Jacob learned before he took a step of his journey, was, that the end of the journey is secured. The promised Land was assured to Jacob and his heirs. So in the Epistle to the Hebrews, again and again, we find that heaven is

secured to us. In chapter ii. 10, we are passing on to glory; in chapter iii. 1, we are partakers of the heavenly calling; in chapter iv. 9, there is a rest that remaineth for us. In chapter vi., the Forerunner, even Jesus, has entered within the veil. In chapter ix. 24, Christ has entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us. Thus, in different ways, the great truth is pressed upon us that, just as of old the Land was secured to Jacob, so heaven is secured to the Christian. Whatever difficulties we may have to meet, whatever trials there may be in the way, though dark valleys, rough ways and many a storm may intervene, yet, at every step, the glory shines before us. God would have us pursue our pilgrim path in the light of the glory to which it leads.

Further, Jacob had, not only the gift of the Land, but, the presence of the Giver. So as Christians we not only have heaven in view as our goal, but we have the Lord's presence with us on the way to heaven. Both at the beginning of the Epistle, and at the end, the writer quotes passages from the Old Testament to prove the Lord is present with His people. In chapter ii., quoting from the 22nd Psalm, he says, "In the midst of the Church will I sing praise unto Thee;" and again he quotes Isaiah viii., "Behold I and the children which God hath given Me." Then, as the Epistle draws to its close, the Lord's words

to Jacob are quoted to show that throughout our journey the Lord is with us, as He has said. "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." The quotations at the beginning of the Epistle show the Lord's association with His people collectively: the quotation at the end, His presence with each one individually. Alas! we may not always be consciously with Him; but He would have us to know that He is with us.

Also Jacob had the assurance of the Lord's support, for He said, "I . . . will keep thee in all places whither thou goest." In like manner the Epistle to the Hebrews very blessedly unfolds to us the priestly grace of the Lord that supports us in our journey through this world. The Lord, at the top of the ladder, is keeping His feeble, failing saints at the bottom of the ladder. In chapter vii, we learn that the One who is made higher than the heavens "ever liveth" for those who are on their way to heaven. It is true that the man at the bottom should ever live for the One at the top of the ladder, even as Paul could say, "For me to live is Christ;" but while we oftentimes fail to live for Him, He never ceases to live for us. Further the Epistle unfolds the effect of the Lord, at the top of the ladder, living for the man at the bottom. First, from chapter ii, we learn that He can help us in our temptations, and, that He does so as One who Himself

has suffered being tempted. To resist the temptation involves suffering. The Lord, when tempted would rather suffer than yield to the temptation; and now, in the moments of our temptation, He is able to help us to suffer rather than sin by giving way to the temptation. Again we learn from chapter iv. 15, that He feels for us in our infirmities. He is not unmoved by what His people suffer from the weakness of the body, for He has not only known temptation, but He has known weariness, and hunger and thirst. Lastly He intercedes for us according to His perfect knowledge of our needs. Thus we have the support of One who, not only lives, but "ever liveth"; and ever living He is able to save us to the uttermost—until earth's journey ends in heaven's glory, and time is closed by eternity.

Then the Lord told Jacob He would bring him into the Land that He had given him. So in the Epistle to the Hebrews we learn that not only has the Lord secured the glory for His people, but very soon He is going to bring His people into the glory, as we read, He is "bringing many sons to glory;" and it is but a "little while," and we shall reach that glory; for "yet a very little while, and He that shall come will come; and will not tarry" (x. 37).

Finally, just as Jacob is assured that the Lord will be faithful to His word—that what

He says He will do—so again and again we are assured of the immutability of God's Word. In chapter i, we are told that God has spoken in the Son: in chapter ii. we are warned that if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, how much more the word of the Son. In chapter vi. we learn that God has not only spoken but confirmed His Word by His oath, and the Word and the oath are spoken of as two immutable things (verses 16-18). Then, in chapter xii., we have the solemn warning that when God speaks, His word comes to pass, even to the shaking and removal of man's kingdom and the bringing in of the everlasting Kingdom that cannot be moved. And we are reminded that if God has spoken we can with the utmost confidence rely upon what God has said. (xiii. 5, 6.)

Thus, in the Epistle to the Hebrews we have a Christian interpretation of Jacob's dream. The Epistle opens by presenting Christ in the glory. It goes on to tell us who this glorious Person is, for of Him we read, "Thou remainest" and "Thou art the same." With the passing of time others pass away, and with the changing years others change; in Christ in the glory we have found One who will never pass away and will never change. Then, as the Epistle proceeds, we learn the gracious work that Christ is accomplishing; He is bringing many sons to glory, and as He brings them on their way, He succours them in their

temptations, He feels for them in their infirmities, and He intercedes for them in their needs. He represents us in heaven, before the face of God, and in a "very little while" He is coming to receive us into glory. Thus we learn where Christ is, who Christ is, what He is doing, and what He will yet do in a very little while. How blessed then the position of the man at the bottom of the ladder, if walking in the light of the glorious Man at the top.

HAMILTON SMITH.

## "AS HE THAT SERVETH."

(Luke xxii. 27).

**O**UR Lord Jesus Christ has served in putting away sin. In wondrous love He has by His sacrifice righteously and eternally removed our sins. And, as the Son of the Father's love, He gives His own true freedom in God's things.

By Him and for Him all things were created. (Col. i. 16.) Among other things, He created "thrones," we are told, and "By Me," He said, "Kings reign and princes *decree* justice." (Prov. viii. 15.) When He came into the world, Caesar *decreed* that which involved His being born in "little" Bethlehem, as "King of the Jews." God's Son had come down to serve.

The Father entrusted the Son with a service which should result in eternal bless-

ing, order and glory. Through "the eternal Spirit" He offered Himself spotless to God. And He said "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." Now He has gone back to the Father, He says, "I also have overcome and have sat down with My Father in His throne." (Rev. iii. 21. N. Tr.) Mark, the serving Son "*sat down*;" so we read in Hebrews i. 3. when God's Son had "by Himself made the purification of sins," *He set Himself down*. He served first in wondrous love.

His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, the son and heir of his father, King George, diligently serves. Yet however successful his service he could not *seat himself in the throne* with his honoured father. His motto reads, *Ich dien* ("I serve"). This he does far and near with general esteem. Sometimes a royal son is greater than a royal father; but not always. The Son of God said, "He that is sent [is not] greater than He that sent Him;" but He also said, "*I and the Father are one.*" Because He is God's Son He could *seat Himself* in the throne. None other could.

The eternal Son served; and with becoming grace and majesty "*sat down with*" His Father in His throne. Eternal praise be His! Through serving in deep suffering and rejection, He brought an Overcomer's distinction to His Father's throne; but being who He Himself is, no seat less could He,

the eternal Son, take.

As promised, He came to little Bethlehem, Judah. The word of Jehovah to His Son—"this day have I begotten Thee"—was fulfilled. The Owner of Israel's vineyard sent His "beloved Son" *from another "country"* (Mark xii. 1), but He was "begotten" in time to serve in view of their salvation, and of the throne and of the priesthood, as Acts xiii., Hebrews i. and v. explain. His wondrous serving however could not be confined to Israel; for, being the Son, by whom and for whom all things were created (Col. i), He came to bring life *to the world*. To behold and believe on the Son therefore brings us into something greater than the earthly promises to Israel. It brings us into life *eternal*; for the Son Himself is "the eternal life." Blessed be God.

Truly He came in royal David's line to secure the promises made to Israel. He was "born king of the Jews;" and the word to Him—"This day have I begotten Thee"—was fulfilled. But beyond the promises was the Father's will, "that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have *everlasting life*." (John vi. 40.) In infinite love His suffering service took Him down into death itself, that life eternal might be ours. What words can tell the heavenly (as well as the earthly) glories which the Son's service secures for the Father's good pleasure? How gloriously immense they are!

That service sets His loved ones free even now, “to abide in the Son and in the Father” (1 John ii. 24).

“ My Father’s business ” were among His first recorded words, and what a life of lowly service, of infinite perfection that meant! Truly His disciples continued with Him. How great their reward! “ *I am among you as He that serveth,*” He said. “ Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom.” *Thrones* are reserved for the apostles of the Lamb.

Good was it for them to be with Him then! Good for us to serve Him now! In His Father’s house He has a prepared dwelling place for us. He will come for us soon, and take us there to be with Him. We shall “ SEE HIM AS HE IS!” Oh, how bright the prospect!

With what words of cheerful encouragement for us the last chapter of the inspired volume speaks: “ *His servants shall serve Him: and they shall see His face.*” In the rest of glory, which His service of love has made ours, that restful responsive service of love will flow on. Curse shall be no more. His name shall be in their foreheads. They shine in what He is; and “ they shall reign for ever and ever;” while their dwelling is with Him in His Father’s house of eternal love.

Our hearts long even now to serve Him better who has served so perfectly. Let us be instructed by Mary who treasured up what was so precious to Himself and to her. That treasure-store was fittingly used in service of fragrant memory. Good works are often prized by men; but a "good work" prized by the Son Himself was Mary's. *She* had the honour of serving *Him*.

Jesus loved Martha and Mary and Lazarus too; but Mary's memorable "good work" is a sweet odour not to be forgotten, the result of having sat at His feet and having heard His word. Even the honoured disciples failed to rightly appreciate the divine sentiment of her loving service; but the holy Son of God valued it; and He said, "Why trouble ye her? She hath wrought a *good work on Me*" (Mark xiv. 6).

The sweet fragrance of it we are told filled the house. And the Son of God said what she had done should be spoken of as a memorial of her.

The eternal Son came into time from the Father, to do His will. He came to serve. He has been here "*as He that serveth.*" Eternal perfectness stamps His service. It has brought to the worshipper the quietude and confidence of faith. In the deep joy of it, our hallowed privilege is to gratefully serve the Son who has served the Father with infinite perfection.

H. J. VINE.

## OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

(*Romans xiii.* 1—*xv.* 7).

Owing to the length of this epistle we have made our remarks briefer and more condensed than usual. It will therefore be more than ever necessary to refer to the Scripture itself as you read this article.

THE earlier exhortations of chapter xii. had to do with our behaviour in the Christian circle. Then from verse 14 to the end we were instructed how to behave in relation to the men and women of the world; it being plainly assumed that we shall find a good deal of hostility in that quarter. As we open chapter xiii., we are instructed how to act in regard to the governments and authorities of this world. A very important point this for the early Christians, who were frequently undergoing persecution from the authorities; and for us, whose lot is cast in an age when authority is treated with scant respect.

The Christian's attitude is to be, in one word—subjection. We are to avoid "resisting the power," that is setting ourselves in opposition to it. The reason given for this must be carefully noted: the "powers that be" are a divine institution, and to set oneself in opposition is to oppose the God, whom they are intended to represent, and to merit judgment. In these verses (1-7) authorities are viewed in their proper character according to the divine intention,

rather than as they often are in actual practice.

At once, therefore, we may call out as to the sad travesty of authority so frequently seen. But we must remember that, when these words were penned, Nero had just about ascended the imperial throne in Rome, and the man who wrote the words was soon to suffer grievous things at the hands of the religious authorities in Jerusalem. Read Acts xxiii. 5, and xxvi. 25, noting in these instances how effectively Paul practised what here he teaches us. Only one thing exempts us from the subjection here demanded, and that is when subjection to authorities would involve us in disobedience to God. Then we must be obedient to the highest Authority. As Peter said, "We ought to obey God rather than man" (Acts v. 29).

If we merely think of government as it exists in the world to-day we must certainly be confused. In all directions there are overturnings, with power passing into the hands of strange people. Under the slogan of "Liberty" worse tyrannies and atrocities take place than those enacted under the despots of older times. But if we look away to God and His Word, all becomes simple. We are not set in the world to make governments or to alter governments, but to seek the interests of our Lord, while yielding all proper honour and subjection to govern-

ments, whatever they may be. The instructions apply to such matters as tribute and custom, as verse 7 shows. We are to pay all that is due in the way of rates, and custom, as well as income tax. What the authorities may do with our money, when they get it, is their matter, not ours. In the mercy of God we are relieved of that heavy responsibility.

Verse 8 extends the thought, of rendering what is due, far beyond governments to all men. The Christian is to be free of all debt, except the debt of love. *That* he can never fully pay. The object of infinite love himself, his attitude is to be love in this unloving world. In so doing he fulfils the law though he is not put under it, as we saw so clearly in chapter vi.

All the foregoing is confirmed and fortified by what we get in the closing verses of the chapter. We should be characterized by this subjection and love, because we are left in the world during the period of its night, in order that we may display the graces of the Lord Jesus Christ while we wait for the coming day. It is very easy to forget this and to settle down into a state of drowsy insensibility like the world. Hence the call to awake. The hour of our final salvation draws nearer!

We are certainly in the darkness. Do we not feel it? But the works of darkness

we are to cast off, like filthy old cloths, and we are to put on "the armour of light." We are to be enveloped in the light which belongs to the day, to which we belong. The believer is to be shining and luminous in the midst of the darkness, and the very light we wear will prove itself to be *armour*. The shining Christian is by his shining protected and preserved. In one word, we are to put on the character of the Lord Himself, instead of catering for the desires of the flesh.

With what power should these words come to us! And with what urgency! If the night was far spent and the day at hand when Paul wrote, how much more so to-day. It is indeed high time to awake out of sleep and array ourselves in our shining armour. Only we must always remember that the "putting on," whether of verse 12 or 14, is not the assuming of something wholly external to ourselves, but rather putting on something from within, rather as a bird puts on its feathers. We saw this in principle, when considering verse 2 of chapter xii.

Chapter xiv. is entirely occupied with a matter that gave rise to very difficult problems in the early years of the church's history. The Jewish converts carried with them pretty naturally their views and feelings about matters of eating and drinking, about the observance of days, and customs, and the like. Their thoughts were partly based

on the law of God, and partly on the tradition of the elders, but at any rate their feelings were very strong. The Gentile converts had no such feelings, and were inclined to regard it all as so much obstinate stupidity on the part of their Jewish brethren. Here was a cause of endless friction. The whole question is raised here, and settled with that admirable simplicity which characterizes Divine wisdom.

We must not let our interest flag at this point. We must not say—These questions do not exist to-day. The whole thing is of purely academic interest. We can dismiss it.

Not so. It is rather of very live and pressing importance. Though the exact questions that agitated and divided first-century Christians may have largely faded away, there are many others of an analogous nature taking their place, and much distress and harm is caused to-day when the instructions of this chapter are not observed. We will not go through the chapter verse by verse, but summarize it, by observing that there are in it three principles established, and three exhortations given; one connected with each principle.

The first is stated in verse 4. We may call it *the principle of Christian liberty*. In these matters that have to do with personal behaviour and conscientious service to the

Lord, we are set free from the lordship of our brethren, by being set under the overlordship of Christ. We may be right or wrong in our judgment, but the thing of prime importance is that we each, with a single eye for our Master, do what we believe to be pleasing to Him. The exhortation which hinges upon this is, "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind."

God intends us to be exercised as to such matters, each for himself. Were there a definite command in Scripture there need not be the exercise. Then, simple obedience is the only course pleasing to God. But these other matters, how many they are. Should I go here or there? Should I partake of this or that? May I enjoy this pleasurable recreation or not? Ought we to carry out this service or this ordinance in this way or that way? What acrimonious and harmful controversies have raged around such questions. And the answer is so simple. Let the wrangling cease! Hands off each other! Each man to his own knees, in the presence of his own Master, that he may get, as far as in him lies, the knowledge of his Master's will.

Having settled in the Master's presence what we believe He would have us do, let us do it in the simplicity of faith. Only it must be *faith*, and not self-will. And we

must not go beyond or lag behind our faith. To do this is to bring condemnation (not, damnation) into our consciences, as the last two verses of the chapter tell us.

Some will say, "But this principle of liberty is sure to be abused." No doubt: but note how it is guarded by what we have in verses 10-12. Here is enforced *the principle of individual responsibility to God*. I may not lord it over my brother, and if I attempt to do so he need not pay much attention to me; but let him remember the judgment seat of Christ. Christ has died and risen again that He might establish His rights in both spheres, that of the dead and that of the living. All our movements then, dying or living, must be in relation to Him. But in giving account to Him we shall be rendering account to GOD. This is a tremendous fact, calculated to move every one of our hearts, and make us very careful in what we do or allow.

The exhortation in connection with this confronts us in verse 13. "Let us no longer therefore judge one another," this is the negative side of it; and the positive is, "but judge ye this rather, not to put a stumbling-block or a fall-trap before his brother" (N. Trans.). We are to keep our eyes on the judgment seat for ourselves, and as regards our brethren see to it that we do not provoke them to a fall. Lower down in the

chapter this is worked out in a very practical way. Verses 15, 20, 21, for instance. Strong language is used. The Apostle speaks of destroying "him . . . for whom Christ died." He says, "destroy not the work of God."

God's sovereign work cannot be annihilated, and the true sheep of Christ shall never perish; but both one and the other can be wrecked in a practical way. The case supposed here is that of some Gentile Christian, spiritually robust and unfettered by prejudices, flaunting his liberty before the eyes of his Jewish brother, who, though still strong as to the law, is weak in the faith of the Gospel. Thereby the weak brother is tempted into doing things with which afterwards he bitterly reproaches himself, settling down perhaps under a spiritual cloud until his dying day.

You and I may be working mischief like that, if we do not take care. So let us look out, and keep our eyes on the judgment seat.

In saying this we have practically anticipated the third great principle of the chapter. It is that of *Christian brotherhood*, or *fraternity*, we may say. Verse 15 clearly states it. "Thy brother . . . for whom Christ died." If Christ died for that weak brother of ours—troublesome and awkward fellow, though he may sometimes be—then he must

be very dear to Christ. Shall he not be dear to us? And let us not forget that you and I may sometimes prove ourselves troublesome and awkward fellows in his eyes. Then may God give *him* grace, as formerly to us, to view *us* as those for whom Christ died.

Based upon this principle comes the exhortation of verse 19. Being brethren we are to pursue the things that make for peace and edification. We are to be keen to build up, not to knock down. We are to aim at peace not at strife. If tempted to transgress, let us ask ourselves Moses' question, "Sirs, ye are brethren; why do you wrong one to another?"

It is possible for us to get things so astray in our thoughts that when we see a feeble brother we say, "See, here is a weak one! Let us give him a push and see if he will fall over." He does fall, poor fellow. Then we say, "We always thought he would. Now you see he is no good, and we are well rid of him." And when we stand before the judgment seat of Christ who died for him, what is going to be said to *us*? If we could hear it now, it would set our ears a-tingling. There is loss to be received as well as reward at that judgment seat!

Once more let us emphasize the fact that all these instructions relate to matters of

individual life and conduct and service, and must not be stretched to include vital truth of God and to condone indifference as to that. Verse 17 lifts our thoughts on to a higher plane. God has established His authority and rule in the hearts of His saints, and this is not concerned with details as to eating and drinking, but with the features of a moral and spiritual order which are well pleasing to Him. That we should be living lives of practical righteousness and peace, and of holy joy, in the power of the Spirit of God, is to His glory. We are brought under His sway, and His Spirit is given to us, to this end.

As brought into that kingdom the principles that are to prevail amongst us are, Liberty, *Responsibility*, Fraternity,—as we have seen,—the responsibility being *Godward*. A century and a half ago the great cry in France became, “Liberty, *Equality*, Fraternity”—the equality being *manward*. What tragedies followed! Very soon a situation developed which was the total negation of all three words! Let us see to it that we observe our three words, which work in the direction of righteousness, peace and joy.

The first paragraph of chapter xv. sums up and completes this subject. The sum of the instruction is that those saints who are strong in the faith ought to bear the infirmities of their weaker brethren. Instead

of pleasing themselves they are to aim at what will be for the spiritual good of the other. The attitude of mind which says, "I have a right to do this, and I am going to do it, no matter what anybody thinks!" is not the mind of Christ. It is exactly what Christ did not do!

"Christ pleased not Himself." The prophet testified this, and the Gospels bear witness to it. He was the only One on earth who had an absolute right to please Himself, yet He lived absolutely at God's disposal and identified with Him; so completely so that, if any wished to reproach God, they naturally heaped their reproaches on the head of Jesus. He is our 'great Example. We need to ponder Him, as made known to us in the Scriptures, and as we do, the patience and comfort necessary, if we are to follow Him, become ours.

So then, we are to manifest the grace of Christ in our dealings the one with the other: we are to be "like-minded . . . according to Christ Jesus." For this we need not only the Scriptures to direct us, but the very power of God Himself, who is the God of patience and consolation. Thus strengthened we shall be able to glorify Him together. Instead of the mind and mouth of the weak being filled with criticisms of the strong, and the mind and mouth of the strong being filled with contempt of the

weak (see, xiv. 2), the minds and mouths of all are to be filled with the praise of God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. This presents a perfectly lovely picture: does it not ?

Well, then, in spite of such differences as may exist, we are to receive one another in the happy enjoyment of Christian fellowship, so that the lovely picture may be realized, to the glory of God.

F. B. HOLE.

## “ A STRANGER IN THE LAND.”

*“ Why shouldest Thou be as a stranger in the land ? ”*

Jer. xiv. 8.

Thou camest Lord, to this sad sinful earth,  
To trace love's footprints on the desert sand ;  
Men gave Thee but a manger at Thy birth,  
And held Thee as a stranger in the land.

We hear Thee speak the word that raised the dead ;  
Amidst the needy crowds we see Thee stand :  
And yet, Thou had'st not where to lay Thy head,  
For wast Thou not a stranger in the land ?

We see the love that held Thee to the Cross,  
Though mocked and hated by the heartless band—  
Arrayed against Thee every evil force—  
A scorned rejected stranger in the land.

Beyond the bands of death for evermore,  
We know the love that knocks with piercéd hand :  
Though still men keep Thee waiting at the door,  
And treat Thee as a stranger in the land.

If thus men scorn Thee, let me take Thy part,  
And tread the way of faith that love has planned ;  
So hold my feet, and satisfy my heart,  
That I may walk a stranger in the land.

HAMILTON SMITH.

## FOR OR AGAINST.

**T**HE Lord Jesus is *for* the saints. He is the Advocate. The devil is *against* the saints. He is the Accuser. The Lord Jesus is the great Friend; the devil the great Adversary. Day and night, unceasingly the Advocate speaks *for* the saints, even when they have sinned. Day and night, unceasingly the Accuser speaks *against* the saints, whether they have sinned or not.

The Lord Jesus is the great Auxiliary and Ally. The Devil is the great Antagonist and Opponent. The Lord Jesus is our Friend at court before the throne of God, and upholds us. The Devil is our enemy there, and seeks our downfall.

Happy are we who believe, in knowing the Lord Jesus as living for us on high—*ever* living to make intercession for us. He knows all that can be said against us for He was fully aware of all that we were in ourselves before He undertook our case. Thus He is not disappointed in what He finds in us after our conversion. The flesh in us, the world around us, the devil about us are all opposed to our blessing. But

Christ in His love and power and wisdom is on our part. Thus we can say "The Lord is on my side I will not fear." All power is in His hand and He will maintain His own through thick and thin, through fire and flood.

Satan hates Christ, and he hates anyone who is His. All that he can, he will accomplish against the One or the other. Ceaseless is his malice; ceaseless is His slander.

His whole history as shown in the Scriptures is one of antagonism to God and Christ and to those who have been the people of God in every age.

He tempted our first mother Eve to distrust and to disobey. (Gen. iii.) He provoked David to number Israel to their destruction. (1 Chron. xxi.) He presents himself before the Lord among the sons of God, and having considered Job, slandering him, asks, "Does Job serve God for naught?" and then brings sorrow and trial upon the patriarch. He stands to resist the blessing of Joshua the high priest and of Jerusalem (Zech. iii. 1). He takes away the word of God sown in the heart. (Mark iv. 15). He binds us down that we may not lift ourselves to glorify God. (Luke xiii. 16). He desires to have believers in his power. (Luke xxii. 31.) He fills the heart of Ananias to lie. (Acts v. 3.) He is the author of divisions. (Rom. xvi.

20.) He seeks to come in between saints. (2 Cor. ii. 10, 11.) and to wreck assemblies. He will send his messenger to oppose the servant of God in ministry. (2 Cor. xii. 7.) He will hinder servants of God in their service. (1 Thess. ii. 18.) He will work by false doctrine in the churches. (Rev. ii. 9; 13; 24; iii. 9.) and is the great deceiver of men generally (Rev. xx. 7). This is a part of the Accuser's history in his relentless malice and enmity. His whole endeavour is to oppose Christ, the truth, and the saints. It matters not to him what means he employs so long as his foul end is achieved.

Are you and I on the side of the Advocate or of the Accuser? Do we speak *for* or *against* saints? Do we gossip about, scandalize, speak slightly, shrug our shoulders when their names are mentioned, chatter or prate against, or *listen* while others disparage, depreciate, vilify, defame, traduce or slander, backbite, speak evil of, run down, criticize, pull to pieces, blacken or "fling dirt" at *any* of the children of God. All this is *distinctly* the *adversary's* work. Do not do his hateful work for him or help him in it. We can stand up for what is right and maintain God's truth, even if opposed by true believers, without any of these evil practices.

Instead of these things let us pray for every child and servant of God everywhere.

“Prayer and supplication for all saints.” Let us speak of the good and not of the evil in a child of God. This is like the Advocate.

Remember then that love thinketh no evil—therefore speaks no evil. Love rejoiceth not in iniquity, and therefore never spreads it. Love never takes up a report against his neighbour for it is written, “Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people” (Lev. xix. 16).

BE ON THE SIDE OF THE ADVOCATE!

INGLIS FLEMING.

## HIS SEVENFOLD GLORY.

**I**N the Gospel of John, we have revealed to us the invisible God; such revelation being brought to us by our Lord Jesus Christ, who is *the Light*. “No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him” (i. 18).

It is therefore fitting and in keeping with the character of the Gospel that we have brought before us in the opening chapter, our Lord Jesus Christ in His seven glories that go, as it were, to make up the light.

The light of the sun from which this world derives all its life and warmth is divisible into seven distinct colours, as seen

in the rainbow and also in the prism. So that we can see that when God placed the rainbow in the clouds as the reminder of His covenant with the earth after the flood, He had Christ before Him, for He is the only ground upon which God could enter into covenant relationship with anyone or anything.

The seven glories of the wonderful Person by whom God has been declared, and as given to us in this first chapter of John are as follows:—

- (1) The Word verse 1.
- (2) The Only begotten of the Father verse 14.
- (3) The Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world verse 29.
- (4) The Son of God verse 34.
- (5) The Christ verse 41.
- (6) The King of Israel verse 49.
- (7) The Son of Man verse 51.

Each of these glories alone would bow our hearts in worship and would call forth our praise eternally, but it might be helpful if we look at each very briefly as they come before us in the chapter.

“In the beginning was the Word.” As has often been pointed out there are three references to “the beginning” in the Word of God. Genesis i., which is the beginning

of creation; 1 John i., which is the beginning of the revelation of God in Christ. John i., which we are now considering, is back to a moment before anything that had a beginning began to be. *Then* HE, who became flesh and dwelt amongst us, *WAS* a Person of the Godhead, designated as "The Word." As we understand language when we give utterance to the thoughts of our mind, and express ourselves by words, so He is thus revealed to us as "The Word." He is the glorious Person in the Godhead by whom all things were created and for whom they were created. He is the One by whom and in whom and through whom all that ever has been expressed of the Godhead has been expressed. He is the Creator of the universe—He whom we know by the lowly Name of JESUS, our beloved Saviour and Lord.

But His relationship in the Godhead is made known to us in the second glory—the glory as of an only begotten Son with a Father. How our hearts move at the contemplation of that relationship and affection, a small picture of which we have set forth for us in the mutual love of Abraham and Isaac. We cannot understand, and we are not asked to understand, *why* there should be relationships in the Godhead, but the blessed Son of the Father came forth to make it known, and God the Holy Spirit delights to bring our hearts into the joy of

it. There was the Father and the Son, and the Son came forth from the bosom of the Father to make known to us the love of that heart of the Father that we might share its joys with Him. But, oh! think of the preciousness of that One to the Father! How it enhances the greatness of His love for us, that it was the One who had such a place in the Father's heart that was given for you and me. What a unique glory is this of JESUS; the most precious object of the Father's heart! What a wealth of love between the Father and the Son has been expressed and brought into display at the Cross of Calvary! The Lord Jesus could say, "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life that I might take it again." The Father and the Son went on together in that tremendous work of redemption, but with one mind, one thought, one heart. "I and My Father are One."

He who is the Father's well beloved Son is the Lamb of God that beareth away the sin of the world. This is the third glory that comes before us. He is the One, who by His death and precious blood is the Taker away, from before God for ever, of the sin of the world. As the result of His taking up and completing the work of redemption, the day is coming when every trace of sin will be removed from the universe of God, and the whole realm of crea-

tion will be filled with His praises; save that in the lake of fire will remain an eternal testimony to the awful reality of sin, and the glory of the Redeemer and redemption. Even those in the lake of fire will bow the knee to Him in accord with the mind and will of God.

If He is the One who redeems to God by His blood, He is the One who, in His own right, after having made purgation for sin, "sat Himself down on the right hand of the Majesty in the Heavens." He is the Son of God. The One who, although He may stoop in lowly grace to be "led as a lamb to the slaughter," nevertheless is in His Person, "The Son of God." Though Man, He has a right in the glory of His Person to the throne of God. He is the Heir to the inheritance, and His title as Heir is that He is "Son of God." The King of England at the present time has four sons, but it is not the bond of affection that exists between the father and the son, that carries with it the right to the throne. *That* belongs to him who is the Heir, and the name of the heir in this case is the Prince of Wales. This may simply serve to show that there is a difference between the thought behind the well beloved Son of the Father and the Name, Son of God. One refers to relationship only, whereas the other has reference also to taking up the inheritance by a Person dis-

played in time. That glorious Person is JESUS, our adorable Saviour and Lord.

The fifth glory is that of "The Christ." It is not enough that He should take up the inheritance as God for the glory of God, but He is the blessed *Man*—the Man Christ Jesus—whom God hath anointed with the Holy Spirit, as the depository of all blessing for the universe and for man. Every blessing and everything that man and the universe needs centres in Christ, now at the right hand of God. He displayed this when here on earth, wherever He went He met every need, whatever it was. "He gave them bread from heaven," He cared for the poor in the preaching of the glad tidings of God. He is the Christ and there is no blessing of God to be obtained from any save JESUS.

The sixth glory is that He is the Heir to the throne of David—the King of Israel. God has not forgotten His promises to Israel and to David their King. Jesus is David's greater Son who shall establish his kingdom and set it up before God for ever. When the King of Israel is on the throne of David all nations shall be at peace; war will be known no more for ever. All the present troubles of the world will vanish when He shall reign whose right it is. In this respect, God overruled that Pilate should inscribe on the Cross the words, "The King of the Jews." Each gospel gives this most

clearly, though there may be differences in other respects. He is the King of Israel.

The seventh title is that of "The Son of Man." This name has a peculiar preciousness, for it is indicative that God has secured in Him all His thoughts for man. When He said, "Let us make man in our image," it was not Adam that He had primarily before Him, but the last Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ. The first man departed from God and yielded nothing for His glory; but the Son of Man in His life yielded nothing else but glory to God. His life ever went up as a sweet smelling savour. In Him was fully expressed, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself." His life was, in the spirit of absolute dependence and subjection to God, the full outgoing of Love. He was the blessed Man who was fully alive to both good and evil, and, in a pathway of absolute perfection, did only that which was good. There was no unevenness in His life. His was the only life that was absolutely, altogether glorifying to God, and no other life but the life of JESUS, will do for God. How necessary it is to contemplate Him as the Son of Man and to feed upon Him as such. He Himself says, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you" (John vi. 53).

Much more could be said on these wonderful glories of our blessed Lord. May He graciously lead us to consider them more deeply for ourselves, and thus draw our hearts out more and more to Himself.

J. F. ENGLISH.

## “THE MARKS OF THE LORD JESUS.”

**C**HRISTIANITY is, it has been suggested lately, “a glorious thing, a great adventure, great fun.”

It is the most glorious thing the world has ever known; “even that which was made glorious had no glory . . . by reason of the glory that excelleth” (2 Cor. iii. 10). It is the greatest and most wonderful adventure upon which men have ever fared forth; but “great fun”? No, most emphatically *no*. It is true that within its circle are happy hours of comradeship in magnificent enterprises, happy hours of resting, of communing, of recreation, but “great fun”? Again we say, no! There is that in the basic and fundamental facts of Christianity which for ever forbids such a thought—

“*The marks of the Lord Jesus.*”

In Zechariah xiii. 6, the question is asked, “What are these wounds in Thy hands? Then He shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of My friends.” Little could the prophet have foreseen the

deep meaning in his words, though we know that the prophets searched diligently " what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow " (1 Pet. i. 11).

On the resurrection day when the Lord came into the midst of His disciples, " He showed unto them His hands and His side " (John xx. 20), " showed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs " (Acts i. 3)., and it was those " marks," those " proofs " which wrung from the penitent Thomas the cry, " My Lord and my God " (John xx. 28).

Afterwards, the Apostle Paul, who was raised up and shown how great things he must suffer, could say, " From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus " (Gal. vi. 17).

Beloved young saints, remember that *the cross is the foundation of Christianity*. Never can we get away from it, nor beyond it; never throughout the golden ages of eternity will there be a moment in which the cross is not remembered. It has been well said that the cross is the centre of two eternities. It is the central point of the universe, the place in which all the glory of God and all blessing for man lies. And

you, if you would have the immeasurable blessing which the Lord Jesus has won for you by His cross; say, could you bring yourself to shirk the way of the cross now? Nay, if you have any apprehension of what has been accomplished for you, the way of the cross will be sweeter to you than any path of glory in this world could be. The disciples who had been beaten for their testimony, rejoiced that “they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His Name” (Acts x. 41).

The history of the church from the apostles' day until our own, abounds with instances of sufferings bravely, even gladly borne; and although to-day, in the main, is not a time of outward persecutions or martyrdoms, and there is, in Christian countries, no languishing in dark dungeons, nor being burned at the stake, yet in lands far overseas are many who have suffered the loss of all things, and who quite literally bear in their bodies the marks of the Lord Jesus. A Christian colporteur was beaten almost to death, but was nursed back to life again. When the time came to start afresh on his mission of life, it was suggested to him that he should go to a less hostile place. “Nay, nay,” was his answer, “it is these people to whom I must return.”

Some who read this page may even now be preparing for service in the foreign field,

and may be called upon to suffer and to die for the Name of the Lord Jesus. We pray they may have His grace, enabling them to say, "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself so that I might . . . testify the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts xx. 24).

Is there any way in which those who lead the ordinary, sheltered life of a Christian at home may bear these marks? Perhaps not, in the full meaning of the words; but they should be borne ever in our spirit and remembrance. There should be the acceptance of the cross as severing ties that bind us here, and all life should be attuned thereunto, even as the apostle Paul could say, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. vi. 14).

Does it seem too hard, too difficult, not possible in the world of to-day? Hard, perhaps, not impossible; there is just one thing, one only, that can make it possible—"The excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus,"—and the Apostle could add,—"**MY LORD**" (Phil. iii. 8).

May writer and reader be ever deepening in the apprehension of this most excellent knowledge for the Lord's pleasure and glory and for our eternal gain.

## OUR SCRIPTURE PORTION.

*(Romans xv. 8—xvi. 27).*

Owing to the length of this epistle we have made our remarks briefer and more condensed than usual. It will therefore be more than ever necessary to refer to the Scripture itself as you read this article.

**H**AVING dealt with matters of practical life and behaviour, the Apostle gives us a little summary of his earlier teaching as to the relations of the Lord Jesus with both Jews and Gentiles. He *did* come as the Servant of all God's purposes in regard to His ancient people; so that the promises made aforetime to the fathers have been confirmed, though as yet they have not been all fulfilled. Then as regards the Gentiles, He came as God's Messenger of mercy to them, so that ultimately they too might glorify God. This showing of mercy to Gentiles, though perhaps quite unexpected by the Jews, was no new thought on God's part, for it had been indicated in Old Testament Scripture. Moses, David and Isaiah had all borne testimony to it, as verses 9-12 show us.

The believers in Rome were mainly Gentiles, hence there is a special force in the Apostle's desire in verse 13. They had been without God and without hope in the world—as the Gentile believers in Ephesus were reminded—and now God, who is the God of hope, is to fill them with such joy and peace that they abound in hope. This

is a most desirable, a most glorious result, which is achieved as the fruit of faith in the Gospel; for it is, "in believing," and also, "through the power of the Holy Ghost." Believing the Gospel, the Holy Spirit is received, and peace, hope and joy follow, as the fifth chapter of our epistle taught us.

Many there are who earnestly desire peace and joy, but they think to arrive at them in working, in resolving, in praying or in feeling, but none of these things lead to the desired end. It is only *in believing*. Faith, and faith alone, puts the soul into touch with God. And only by the Spirit are our hearts filled with all joy and peace and hope, which are the proper fruits of the Gospel. It is very fitting that the Apostle should desire these things for those to whom he wrote, seeing that this epistle unfolds the Gospel which produces them.

In verse 14 Paul expresses his confidence in the believers in Rome, and from that point he turns to write of more personal matters, both as regards them and as regards himself.

First, he deals with his own service to the Lord and unbosoms to them his intentions as well as referring to what he had already accomplished. This occupies all the remaining verses of chapter xv.

Paul's ministry had especial reference to Gentiles, and in verse 16 he speaks of it

in a very remarkable way. He ministered the Gospel amongst them as a sacrificial service, so that he considers those who were converted as being offered up to God for His acceptance in the sanctification and fragrance imparted by the Holy Spirit, who had been conferred upon them as believers. In this perhaps he alludes to the sanctification of the Levites, as recorded in Numbers viii. 1-19. It is expressly said there, "And Aaron shall offer the Levites before the Lord for an offering of the children of Israel, that they may execute the service of the Lord."

This shows us the spirit in which the Apostle carried on his gospel service. The apostle Peter speaks of Christians as royal priests who show forth the virtues of the One who has called them, and what we find here is in keeping with that. Paul acted in priestly fashion even in his gospel labours, and the fruit of them was seen in Gentile converts offered to God for His service as a band of spiritual Levites. In all this therefore he could boast, but his boasting was "through Jesus Christ," or, "in Christ Jesus" ; for it was all referable to Him as the great Master-worker.

These thoughts lead to a brief survey of his labours already accomplished. First, as to their great scope and extent, "from Jerusalem, and in a circuit round to Illyri-

cum." Illyricum lay to the north west of Macedonia, so we can see what a vast district he had fully covered, considering the difficulties of transport in his day. Second, as to their peculiar character of pure and unadulterated evangelization. He was the pioneer of the Gospel in a supreme sense. He addressed himself to the Gentiles in a way that no other apostle did, and he went into strange cities that no other had visited. In this he was helping to the fulfilment of Scripture, as verse 21 shows.

Just because this was the special character of his service he had been hindered from coming to Rome. Christians had already gravitated to it as the metropolis of the world of that day, and thus the Gospel already had a footing there. Yet we can see Paul's missionary heart looking beyond Rome to distant Spain, and contemplating a journey thitherward some day, with a call at Rome on the way. For the moment he had before him a visit to Jerusalem in order to carry thither the contribution for the poor saints, made by the believers in Macedonia and Achaia.

We find an allusion to this collection for the saints in 1 Corinthians xvi. 1-4, and again at much greater length in 2 Corinthians viii. and ix. If those passages be read we can at once see why the Apostle here places Macedonia before Achaia. The Philippians were poor as compared with the

Corinthians yet they were far more liberal. They talked less and gave more. The Acts of the Apostles furnishes us with a twofold explanation of what gave rise to the need. There was a famine in those days (xi. 27-30), and also the believers in Jerusalem had been in a special way impoverished by the "Christian communism" they practised at the beginning (ii. 44, 45). Their impoverishment however furnished the occasion for the cementing of practical bonds of Christian fellowship between Gentile and Jew.

There was a strong tendency in those days for Jew and Gentile to fall apart, and this tendency was increased by the scheming of Judaising teachers from Jerusalem. Hence Paul evidently considered this collection a very important matter and insisted on being the bearer of the bounty himself. He was quite aware of the danger he ran, and verse 30 and 31 of our chapter show that he had some premonitions of coming trouble. Whether he was really right in going to Jerusalem has been a much discussed question. We need not attempt to answer it here, but we shall do well to note that the prayer, in which he asked the Roman saints to join with him, was answered, though not in just the way he hoped. He was delivered, but not as a free man. He was delivered from his persecutors by his imprisonment at the hands of the representatives of Caesar.

So also did he finally come amongst the Roman Christians with joy, being refreshed among them, as Acts xxviii. 15, witnesses. Another proof this of how God answers our prayers, but in the way that is according to His will, and not according to our thoughts and wishes. We may also be sure that Paul came amongst them in fulness of blessing. Philippians i. 12, 13, is proof of this, as also Philemon 10. Peace was what the Apostle desired, peace in which both the saints of God and the work of God might flourish; hence the chapter closes with the desire that the God of peace might be with them.

We shall do well to notice the three ways in which God is characterized in this chapter. "The God of patience and consolation" in verse 5. "The God of hope" in verse 13. "The God of peace" in verse 33. Having noted them we shall do well to meditate upon them. What God is at any time He is always, and what He is for any of His people He is for all and for each. Therefore He is all this for you and for me.

In chapter xvi. we get the closing salutations. Phebe seems to have been the bearer of the epistle, and Paul works in this word of commendation concerning her so that the saints at Rome might freely and without question receive her. She had succoured many and even Paul himself in

the course of her service at Cenchrea. The word, "servant" is really, "deaconess."

From verse 3 to verse 15 we have a long list of names of those in Rome to whom salutations were sent. At the head of the list come two names that we are familiar with, Priscilla and Aquila. It is evident that they head the list designedly, for of no others are such words of high commendation spoken. They had laid down their lives on Paul's behalf, though in God's mercy their lives had been preserved to them. This is the limit of human love according to the Lord's words in John xv. 13. It is also what every Christian *ought* to do if the occasion arises, according to 1 John iii. 16; because we are here not only to display human kindness but, as those who partake of the Divine nature, to display divine love.

The Apostle shows a wonderful discrimination in his salutations. This one is a kinsman: that one a helper: the other is chosen in the Lord. Again, these are beloved, and that one is well-beloved, and these are of note among the apostles. Some have laboured and others have laboured much. In the largeness of his spiritual affections he had a definite link with each. But evidently Priscilla and Aquila outshone all as the exponents of a love which was divine, and that gave them the first place over the heads of many more gifted than themselves.

That love of divine quality, which gives itself even unto death, stands alone in its value. This was exemplified in the days of David—see, 2 Samuel xxiii. 13-17. It is made plain in the solemn words of our Lord, recorded in Revelation ii. 4. We have no doubt but that it will be most fully manifested in that day when we all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. So let us take it to heart now.

“Love never faileth,” love is pure gold ;  
Love is what Jesus came to unfold ;  
Make us more loving, Master, we pray,  
Help us remember, love is Thy way.”

Verses 17-20 follow, giving us a picture which is the very reverse of all this. There were those in the earliest days, as also to-day, who served not the Lord but their own selfish desires. Such produce divisions and are to be avoided. Their words may be beautiful—smoother than butter—but they are contrary to the doctrine. This is the test. Not, can they speak pleasant things ; but, do they speak according to that which we have received from God ? The prime mover in all error is Satan, and when he is bruised under the feet of the saints by the God of Peace there will be peace indeed.

There follow the salutations of a band of labourers who were with Paul as he wrote ; and again it seems in verse 24 as if he is closing his letter, as previously in verse 20, and at the end of chapter xv. Once more,

however, a word is added. It appears that at this point according to his custom Paul took the pen from the hand of his amanuensis to write with his own hand. His closing words are of deep importance.

The Apostle Paul had a twofold ministry, as he unfolds in Colossians i. 23-29. To both ministries he alludes very briefly in these closing verses. The Gospel, which he calls "my Gospel" he had unfolded very fully in this epistle. The "mystery" he had not mentioned at all, though it had been revealed to him and other of the prophets, and had been promulgated in prophetic writings. He would have the believers at Rome know that important as it was that they should be established according to the Gospel he had just unfolded, it was equally important that they should be established according to the mystery, of which it was not his purpose to write at that time.

If important for the Romans, then for us also. God is able to establish us in both. Are we concerned about both? If not we ought to be. Because the church, as an outward, visible, professing body, is in a broken condition we are not exempted from concerning ourselves about the mystery, but rather it is the more necessary for us. The mystery concerns the Gentiles, hence it is made known to all nations, and made known

for the obedience of faith: made known, not merely to be understood but to be *obeyed*.

Never more than to-day was there a crying need for really established Christians. God alone can establish us, and we are only fully established if established in both. No man can stand securely if only standing on one leg. The Gospel and the Mystery are like two legs whereon we may securely stand. Let us aim at standing on *both*.

F. B. HOLE.

## ANSWER TO A CORRESPONDENT.

Could you explain Hebrews ii. 9, "By the grace of God"? Did He receive any grace from His Father when dying for us?--SKELMANTHORPE.

**T**WICE in verse 8 is it stated that *all* things are put under the feet of Christ. In verse 9 we discover the amazing fact that He has suffered death for *all*. A very great *contrast* indeed! But more than this, it was the most wonderful *grace*. It was by the grace of God He did it. He is viewed here not so much as receiving grace from God as setting forth the grace of God.

Had you given us your address we think we should have sent this short reply by post. May we remind all our correspondents to give their names and addresses when writing.